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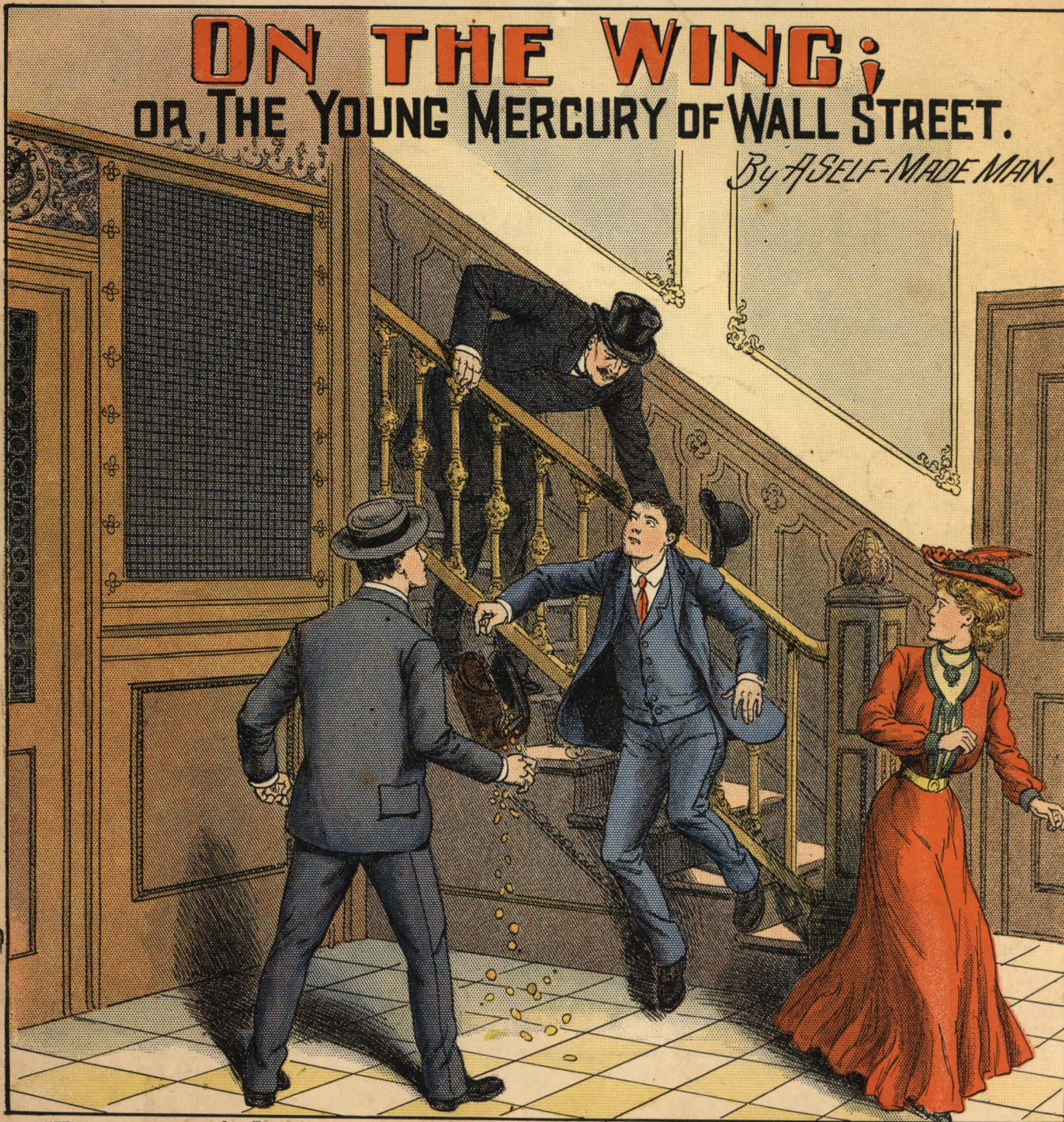
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FAME & FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

ON THE WING; OR, THE YOUNG MERCURY OF WALL STREET.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



"You young rascal! Is this what I am paying you for?" exclaimed broker Dubois, angrily, seizing his messenger by the collar, and shaking him as a terrier would a rat. The boy's satchel flew open, discharging a shower of coin.

Fame and Fortune Weekly

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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ON THE WING

OR

The Young Mercury of Wall Street

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

BOB HARKER AND OTHERS.

"Bob, this is Miss Havens," said Mildred Snow, the office stenographer.

"Pleased to make your acquaintance, Miss Havens," said Bob Harker, Mr. Northrup's messenger boy.

Eva Havens, a pretty brunette, smiled and nodded at the good-looking boy.

She was stenographer for Old Mudgett, as he was called, a Wall Street trader whose office was on the same floor of the Trust Building with William Northrup, stock broker, with whom Bob and Miss Snow worked.

She had dropped in to get her lunch with Mildred, for the two girls had lately become quite chummy.

"Bob Harker is one of the lucky boys," laughed Mildred.

"Indeed," said Miss Havens, with an air of interest.

"Yes. He's been saving up his money for some time, to see how much he could gather together, I suppose, when the other day he got an idea in his head that O. & S. stock was going to rise. So he bought ten shares on a ten per cent. margin, which I should call a very risky operation for a messenger boy, or anyone else for that matter whose capital was very small like Bob's. You bought the stock at 72, didn't you, Bob?"

"That's right," nodded Bob.

"Well, what do you think, Eva? If that stock didn't

actually go up nearly twenty-six points, and Bob made \$250."

"I congratulate you, Mr. Harker," said Miss Havens, smilingly.

"Thanks; but please don't call me Mr. Harker. Plain Bob is good enough. You see, everybody calls me Bob. This is the first time I've been addressed as Mr. Harker in a dog's age."

"Pray what is a dog's age, Mr.—I mean, Bob?" laughed Miss Havens.

"A dog's age? Well, now you've got me. I suppose it's the age of a dog."

"But what is the age of a dog?" persisted Eva.

"I give it up. A dog's age, I judge, is the length of time he lives, which depends on his luck. I simply used the expression because my friend, Freddy Parks, uses it."

"Is Freddy Parks a messenger boy, too?" asked Miss Havens.

"Yes. He works for Dunston Dubois, No. — Wall street. Freddy is a smart boy."

"I'll bet he isn't as smart as somebody I know," put in Mildred, with a roguish smile.

"Who is that?" asked Bob, looking at her.

"Oh, you want to know too much, Bob."

"I don't believe anybody can know too much," retorted Bob.

"Don't you? I think they can, sometimes."

"Well, I want to know who this person is who in your opinion is smarter than Freddy Parks. I've got a dollar to bet that he isn't."

"Bet your small change first, Bob."

"How much do you want to bet? A nickel?"

"I don't want to bet at all."

"I thought I'd make you back down."

"I'm not backing down. The boy I think smarter than your friend Freddy spells his name Robert Harker."

"Come now; no jollying, Mildred."

"I'm not jollying you. I'm only telling the truth. Can't I have my opinion?"

"You only say that because Miss Havens is here."

"No such thing. I've always thought so."

"You ought to feel flattered, Mr.—Bob," smiled Eva.

"Oh, she's just giving me a dose of taffy."

"Why, the idea!" ejaculated Mildred. "Now, Bob, be a good boy and take these cups out into the other room."

"I don't mind doing that for you," replied the boy, taking up the two cups the girls had been drinking tea out of and carrying them off.

"Bob is one of the nicest boys in the Street," remarked Miss Snow as soon as the young messenger was out of earshot.

"Yes, I think he is very polite and—good looking."

"Shall I tell him what you have said?" smiled Mildred.

"Oh, no, no; not for anything," cried Miss Havens in a panic.

"He'd take it as quite a compliment, coming from you."

"But I don't want you to tell him. I wouldn't have him know I said that for the world."

"Then I won't tell him, of course. So you really think he's nice?"

"You can't trap me into any more confessions, Mildred," laughed Eva.

"Why, I'm not trying to trap you into anything."

"I don't know about that. I'm afraid you're very artful."

"The idea! Me artful? Just as if I was," replied Miss Snow, assuming an injured expression.

"What are you two scrapping over now?" asked Bob, returning at the moment.

"We're not scrapping," answered Mildred. "Girls don't do such things."

"Oh, they don't, eh? I've seen some pretty good imitations, then. Hello, there's Freddy now. Come in, Parks, and show yourself."

Freddy Parks, a sprightly young lad, a year Bob's junior, came grinning down to that corner of the counting-room.

"What you doing in here, Bob? Can't you leave the girls alone?"

"Miss Havens, this is my friend, Freddy Parks," said Bob.

Freddy bobbed his head with another grin, and then winked at Miss Snow, whom he knew pretty well.

"New stenographer?" he asked.

"No, Freddy. We've got all the stenographers we want in Miss Snow. Miss Havens works for old Mudgett on this floor," said Bob.

"Mr. Mudgett wouldn't like to hear you call him by that name, Mr.—, that is Bob," laughed Miss Havens.

"Why, that's what everybody calls him. He's ancient enough, even if he does dress like a dude."

"I never see him but I think of a baboon," chuckled Freddy.

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Freddy Parks?" cried Mildred.

"No! I'll leave it to Miss Havens if I ain't right. If she works for him she ought to know."

Eva Havens, however, remained discreetly silent.

"What brought you over here, Freddy?" asked Bob. "Want to see me?"

"Yep. I want to tell you something good."

"I'm always 'ready to hear something good. What is it?"

"Come outside and I'll tell you."

"Can't you tell me before the girls?"

"Nope. This is something that mustn't get around."

"Why, do you think we'd tell, Freddy?" asked Mildred.

"A girl couldn't keep a secret to save her life," replied Freddy.

"I like that," exclaimed Miss Snow. "We ought to feel highly complimented, oughtn't we, Eva?"

"So you've got a secret to tell me?" said Bob.

"Yep."

"Run along, Bob," laughed Mildred. "We don't care to know Freddy's secret."

"I'll bet you'd like to know all right," grinned Freddy, as he and Bob walked away.

"Well, what is this mysterious communication?" asked Bob, as soon as they were in the waiting-room.

"I've got a tip at last," whispered Freddy.

"A tip on the market?" asked Bob, with some interest.

"Yep. A real Simon-pure, A1 copper-fastened pointer. You've got \$75 or \$80, haven't you?" he asked.

Bob hadn't told Freddy that he had made a haul of \$250 in O. & S.

"Yes, I've got that easy enough," nodded Bob.

"So have I. I've got as much as \$100."

"You're lucky. Most messenger boys haven't a hundred cents between pay days."

"Well, I want you to go in with me on L. & D."

"What is doing in L. & D.?" asked Bob, curiously.

"Nothing yet; but just you wait. It's ruling at 55 to-day. Next week it will be——"

"What?"

"It will be higher, all right. Perhaps 65."

"What makes you think it will?"

Freddy gave an expressive wink.

"I've heard something."

"What did you hear?"

"I heard that a syndicate has been formed to boss it."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yep," replied Freddy, confidently.

"How did you come to hear it?"

"The members had a meeting in our office this morning."

"S'pose they did. They didn't call you inside and tell you what they were going to do, did they?"

"I guess not."

"Then how did you find out?"

"Oh, I've got ways of finding out things," chuckled Freddy.

"I suppose that's none of my business, eh?"

"It wouldn't do you any good to know. As long as I got the tip that ought to satisfy you."

"How can I tell whether your tip is worth anything or not?"

"You can take my word for it."

"That's all right, Freddy. You may mean well enough, but you may be fooling yourself."

"I'm not fooling myself, don't you worry. I'm going to buy twenty shares of L. & D. on margin right away. That'll cost me \$110. That's nearly the extent of my pile. You don't suppose I'd risk all my money unless I knew what I was doing?"

"Wiser heads than yours have made mistakes in Wall Street, Freddy."

"That's nothing to do with me and this tip. Will you come in on it?"

"I'll have to think about it."

"If you don't think mighty quick, you'll be out of it, I can tell you that."

"All right, Freddy; then it will be my funeral, not yours."

"If you miss it I'll bet you nine dollars you'll wish next week you hadn't."

"Can't you give me any more information on the subject?"

"I'll tell you this much: Mr. Dubois called me into his private room to send me on an errand, and I heard the six big traders in there talking among themselves. I heard enough to show me that they were going to boom L. & D."

"I suppose your boss is going to do the buying, or some of it?"

"I guess he is. That's his business, isn't it?"

"That's right. Well, I'll let you know whether I will take advantage of this pointer of yours or not, Freddy."

"I'm going to buy to-morrow."

"We can buy separately, can't we?"

"Of course we can, only I thought it would be better if we both went in together. Well, think it over. I've got to get back to the office. I wouldn't be loafing here if it wasn't that the market is quiet."

Bob promised to give the matter his immediate attention, and Freddy went away.

CHAPTER II.

BOB PERFORMS A KINDLY ACTION AND MAKES A FRIEND.

Bob Harker had been working nearly two years for William Northrup.

He was an orphan and lived with his only sister, a dressmaker in a small Harlem flat.

He had been born and brought up in New York, and had never been further away from the metropolis than Newark, New Jersey.

Mr. Northrup considered him an unusually bright boy and a smart messenger, and placed implicit confidence in his integrity.

"Bob," said Mr. Northrup, on the morning following Freddy Parks's revelation of the tip he claimed to have acquired, "take this note to the office of Bailey & Dempsey, and hand it to Mr. Bailey. There may be an answer."

"Yes, sir," replied Bob, promptly.

He put on his hat and departed on his errand.

Bailey & Dempsey's office was in the Mills Building, and Bob made a beeline for Broad street.

He took the elevator for the fourth floor as soon as he reached the Mills Building, and a minute later stepped out on the corridor.

As he started for room No. —, he noticed a little old gentleman walking in a somewhat unsteady manner ahead of him.

He was neatly but plainly attired, had snow white hair, and appeared to be rather feeble, either from old age or some bodily infirmity.

Just before Bob came up to him the old gentleman slipped on the marble floor and went down heavily.

He lay there perfectly helpless.

There was no one else in the corridor at the time, and Bob rushed to his aid.

"Allow me to help you up, sir," he said politely, bending down and placing his strong arm under the old gentleman's shoulders.

"Thank you, my lad, thank you," replied the white-haired man gratefully. "I am sorry to trouble you, but I am not very strong and I am afraid I have had a shock. I had no business to venture out of the house. My son will be very much provoked with me for doing so; but it's my way."

Bob gently assisted him on his feet, and supported his trembling limbs, which seemed almost unable to hold him up.

His hands shook as he laid them on the boy's arms.

"I'm afraid," he said, in shaky tones, "that I'll have to ask you to assist me as far as my son's office."

"I will do that with pleasure," answered Bob. "Take your time. I will see that you get there all right. What is the number of the room?"

"No. —," he said. "My son's name is Wilford Staples. It is on the door. He is a stock broker. My name is Godfrey Staples. I was a broker for fifty years myself and a member of the Exchange for over forty years. I am 85 years of age. I shall be very glad to know your name, young man. You are exceedingly kind to me, and I shall not forget it—neither will my son after I have told him."

"My name is Robert Harker, sir."

"You are working in this vicinity, I presume—a messenger perhaps?"

"Yes, sir. I work for William Northrup, stock broker, No. — Wall street."

They were now opposite the door of Wilford Staples's office.

Bob turned the knob and ushered the old gentleman inside.

"I suppose I can't do anything more for you, sir," said the young messenger, preparing to take his leave.

"Don't go for a few moments," said the old gentleman, detaining him. "Is my son in his room?" he asked the office boy who came forward.

"Yes, sir."

"Is he engaged?"

"No, sir."

"Come inside with me," he said, turning to Bob. "I want to introduce you to my son."

So Bob assisted him into the private office.

"Why, father!" exclaimed a handsome man of perhaps fifty, rising hastily from his desk. "What brings you down here in your condition? Really this is very imprudent on your part."

He took charge of the old gentleman and led him to a leather-upholstered lounge.

"I had a fall in the corridor," said old Mr. Staples.

"A fall!" exclaimed Wilford Staples, anxiously. "I hope you didn't hurt yourself."

"I shall be all right presently, Wilford. This young man, Robert Harker, was so kind as to come to my aid at once. I don't think I could have reached the office but for his strong arm. I want you to thank him and remember him."

Wilford Staples turned around and grasped Bob by the hand.

"You have conferred a great favor on me by assisting my father."

"Don't mention it, sir," replied Bob. "It gave me great pleasure to be able to do what I did for him."

Bob's answer, as well as his bright and cheerful demeanor, produced a very favorable impression on the stock broker.

"I hope I shall be able to do something for you in return, Harker," he said.

"I am much obliged to you, sir; but I don't think there is anything you can do for me at present."

"In the future, then. Here is my card. I shall be very happy to have you come and see me, if only for a few minutes, once in a while."

"Give him our address, Wilford," put in the old gentleman. "I don't get downtown very often. I should like to have him call and see me occasionally."

"You hear what my father says?" remarked the broker. "Let me have that card a moment."

Bob handed it back to him and he wrote something in pencil on the back of it.

"There, that is where we live. Father resides with me,

and I hope you will oblige him by calling on us whenever you can make it convenient to do so."

"Thank you, sir. I will if Mr. Wilford is really anxious for me to do so."

"I am anxious, Robert," said the old gentleman. "You have done me a great service, and I don't want to lose sight of you. It is not improbable that I can be of assistance to you in the future, and it would give me great pleasure to do you a favor some day. I like your face. You are a bright, energetic and capable lad. The time may come when a little influence at your back would be of great advantage to you."

"I am much obliged to you for your suggestion, Mr. Wilford; but I hope I shall be able to push myself ahead without any help from others. I am ambitious to succeed through my own efforts alone. I think there is more satisfaction in that."

The old gentleman nodded approvingly.

"The sentiment does you credit, Robert," he said; "but nevertheless it is of advantage to any young man to have a friend to call upon in the moment of need."

"Where are you employed, Harker?" asked Wilford Staples.

Bob told him.

The broker made a note of the fact.

Then Bob took his leave and delivered his note to Mr. Bailey, whose office was at the further end of the corridor.

Mr. Bailey scribbled a reply and handed it to the young messenger, who then left.

Turning into the main corridor, he ran against another messenger with such force that both went to the floor and their notes went flying.

"What did you do that for?" snarled the other messenger, an ill-natured looking boy named Ben Pixley, who worked for the brokerage firm of Blumstein & Co., whose office was in the Vanderpool Building, in Exchange Place.

"I didn't see you," retorted Bob. "I think it's as much your fault as mine."

"I believe you done it on purpose," said Pixley. "I've a great mind to punch you in the eye."

"I wouldn't try it," replied Bob coolly.

"Do you think you kin lick me?" asked Pixley, belligerently, as he stooped and picked up the envelope nearest to him.

"I'm not thinking anything about it," answered Bob, walking over toward the other envelope, which lay a couple of yards away.

"You better not," replied Pixley, who then started off and presently disappeared into a nearby office.

"This isn't my envelope," said Bob, as soon as he had it in his hand. "It's addressed to—why, the flap is open and there's nothing in it."

He looked around on the floor and saw a white card lying there.

"Maybe that dropped out of it," he said, stooping and picking it up.

On the card, written in large legible handwriting, was the following:

"Friend Ed.—Have just learned that the McAlpine crowd is about to corner L. & D. That means a boom. Our firm is going to do some of the buying and booming. Get in on the ground floor. Tom."

Bob read the brief communication.

"L. & D.," he muttered. "That's the stock Freddy was telling me about. This seems to confirm his story. Gee! What have I been doing? I have no right to be reading the confidential communications of other people. I didn't think what I was doing. That collision must have knocked my senses endwise. However, it can't be helped now. I can't say that I'm not glad to have Freddy's statement backed up."

He hastily returned the card to the envelope and managed to stick the flap.

"I must return this to that messenger and get my own envelope. What office did he go in anyway?"

As if in answer to his question, he heard a door slam and footsteps hurriedly approach.

In another moment Pixley bounced around the corner in a rush.

The moment he saw Bob he rushed up to him.

"Here you, you've got my envelope. Why didn't you pick up the right one?"

He snatched his own out of Bob's hand, tossed the other at Bob and retraced his steps.

"He's mighty polite, I don't think," said Bob, picking up the envelope which had dropped on the floor. "Some day I may have to teach him good manners."

With these words, Bob left the building with his thoughts engrossed upon the coming boom in L. & D.

CHAPTER III.

BOB GETS A FALL, BUT SAVES A LITTLE GIRL FROM A WORSE ONE.

After delivering Mr. Bailey's reply to Mr. Northrup, Bob came out into the reception-room.

There were no customers in the room at the moment, and so the boy took advantage of the fact to look at the tape in the ticket basket.

After going back a yard or two he came to the latest quotation of L. & D.

The last sale was 800 shares at 55 3-8.

"I've money enough to buy fifty shares," he mused. "I think I'll take the risk, for it looks like a sure thing."

He looked up the record of the stock for a fortnight past and found that L. & D. had been going down steadily from around 65, which, on further investigation, seemed to have been its normal value.

"It's good for a ten-point rise as far as I can see, for it ought to go back to 65 anyway when the market gets bullish. This syndicate scheme, however, is sure to hasten matters and cause it to rise five or ten points above that point. Yes, I guess I'll buy at once and get the cream. Let others have the skimmed milk who get in on the deal late."

Bob, however, didn't have a chance to go to a certain little bank in Nassau street that made a specialty of engineering deals for small investors until after the Exchange had closed for the day.

The brokerage department of this bank was open until four o'clock for the accommodation of customers who were unable to place their next day's orders during Exchange business hours.

As Bob had only lately closed his first deal at a profit with the bank, the margin clerk recognized him when he presented himself at the window in the reception-room.

"Back again, I see," he said with a business-like smile. "What is it this time?"

"It's fifty shares of L. & D.," replied Bob, promptly.

"Expect you have another winner, eh?"

"Sure, or you wouldn't see me here."

"Let me see," said the clerk, consulting a printed sheet of the day's transactions at the Exchange. "L. & D. closed at 55 7-8. Our representative may have to pay 56. We'll figure it at that. It will cost you \$280 margin."

"All right," replied Bob. "Here you are."

The clerk counted the money and handed him a memorandum of the transaction.

Bob put it in his vest pocket, left the bank and took the elevated train for home.

Next morning he told Miss Snow in confidence that he had gone into another speculative venture.

"I'm sorry to hear it," she replied. "You've got the Wall Street fever by winning that \$250. You will probably lose your money this time."

"Don't you believe it, Mildred," replied Bob, confidently. "I'm going to win more than \$250 this time."

"I should like to think so, for I take an interest in you, Bob, and don't want to see you drop your money in the hole where thousands of hopeful people have lost theirs; but the chances are all against you. You ought to know that yourself without me telling you so."

"The chances are not so much against me as you may think. I heard from good authority that there is going to be a boom in L. & D. and I am willing to risk my money on the reliability of my information."

"Who told you that L. & D. was going to rise? The market has been very unsteady since the recent slump in values right after you realized that \$250."

"Never mind who told me, Mildred. The pointer was all right, for I had it confirmed yesterday in a singular manner. Just keep an eye on L. & D. I bought it at 56. That's a very low figure for the stock. My principle is to buy low and sell high, and the difference between is what I rake in, see?"

"I see," laughed the girl, "and it would be very nice if it always worked out in the right way. But it doesn't, that's why so many people leave their money with the brokers."

Here Bob heard his bell ring in the reception-room and he hurried into Mr. Northrup's room to see what his employer wanted.

He had several letters he wanted Bob to deliver, so the boy got his hat and was soon on the street.

One of the letters was addressed to a man in the Bowling Green Building and Bob got rid of the others before he started for the foot of Broadway.

As he was hurrying past the upper end of the railed enclosure known as Bowling Green Park something suddenly struck his hat and sent it flying into the street.

Before he started to recover his headgear he looked to see who had thrown the missile, and saw Ben Pixley's homely face grinning at him from the walk inside the railing.

Now Bob had never seen Pixley to his knowledge until the day previous, when the two boys had collided in the corridor of the Mills Building; but Ben's manner had been so offensive on that occasion as to cause Bob to take a dislike to him.

When he found that it was that disagreeable youth who had shied a rotten apple at him that had hit his hat he was considerably nettled, and, being a plucky youth, he determined to have it out with the chap then and there, though Pixley was larger than himself and looked fairly tough.

Pixley, however, didn't wait to see what would happen, for as soon as Bob turned to get his hat he hastened away.

Bob looked after his retreating figure and concluded not to follow him.

As he was evidently connected with the Wall Street district, Bob figured that he was bound to see him again.

So he went on and delivered his last letter on the third floor of the Bowling Green Building.

On his way back up Broad street he saw Pixley talking to a boy in front of the Cable Building.

He walked right up to him.

"What did you throw that apple at me for?" he demanded, with a resolute air.

"What's the matter with you?" retorted Ben, glaring at Bob.

"You know what's the matter with me. You knocked my hat off with a rotten apple down at Bowling Green Park a little while ago. What did you do it for?"

"Oh, rats!" replied Pixley, with a derisive grin.

"If it wasn't that I didn't want to have a mix-up right here on the street I'd make you apologize."

"Apologize nothin'," replied Bob, insolently. "I owed you that for bumpin' into me yesterday mornin' in the Mills Buildin'. You ought to be glad I let you off so easily. I ought to knock the stuffin' out of you."

Bob's eyes flashed fire and his fists unconsciously clenched.

"I'll remember you the first chance I get," he said, angrily.

"Why don't you punch him in the snoot, Pixley," said Ben's companion, who was evidently a boy of his own stamp.

"You kin remember me if you want to," replied Ben, flippantly. "I'd just as soon lick you as anyone else."

"You'll talk in a different——"

That's as far as Bob got, when Pixley suddenly shoved his smaller companion against him, causing Harker to stagger back, slip and fall on the sidewalk.

The other boy tripped over his legs and pitched forward against the end of an apple vendor's pushcart drawn up alongside the curb.

The concussion dislodged the stick that supported the end of the two-wheeled vehicle, the cart tipped, carrying the boy with it, and the apples at the other end were propelled into the air and fell in a shower against the heads of a pair of horses attached to a basket cart in which a handsomely dressed little girl was seated.

The horses were frightened and began to back around, tilting the carriage over the curb.

The child screamed and was thrown out.

Bob, however, had scrambled to his feet just in time to catch the little girl and save her from an ugly fall.

CHAPTER IV.

BOB MAKES HIS FIRST \$1,000.

Pixley, aghast at the havoc he was responsible for, and dreading the consequences, ran into the basement of the telegraph building, while the Italian vendor grabbed the boy who had upset the cart and began to belabor him with his fists.

A crowd quickly collected, and in the midst of the confusion the basket-cart team dashed off down toward Beaver street.

To add to the general confusion a lady who had just appeared at the entrance to the Cable Building uttered a shrill scream and fainted on the steps.

"Mamma, mamma!" cried the frightened girl, struggling in Bob's arms.

"I'll take you to your mamma," said Bob, setting the child down and taking her by the hand.

"That was well done, young man," said a stout broker, stepping up and clapping the young messenger on the back. "You saved that little girl from a bad fall. Dear me," he added, "I believe that is Mr. Staples's granddaughter."

"Do you mean Broker Staples, of the Mills Building?" asked Bob in surprise.

"Yes."

"Take me to mamma," interrupted the child.

"All right," said Bob. "I suppose that's your mamma on the steps."

There was a small crowd around the lady who was recovering her senses.

"My child!" she cried frantically, struggling to rise.

"Here she is, ma'am," said Bob, pushing a passage through the people on the steps.

The lady saw her daughter instantly and grabbed her in her arms.

Then Bob turned away, intending to return to his office, but was stopped by a newspaper reporter who happened to be on the scene and had observed the whole occurrence.

"Will you oblige me with your name, young man?" he asked, drawing out his notebook.

"What for?" asked Bob.

"I'm a reporter for the ———."

"I don't want to get into print," objected the boy.

"That won't hurt you," laughed the reporter. "I'll treat you well."

Bob gave him his name, occupation and place of business, and one or two other particulars, and then the newspaper man let him go.

At that moment Freddy Parks came along and caught Bob by the arm.

"What's the excitement around here?" he asked.

"A boy upset an apple cart for one thing," replied Bob, "and there was a runaway for another. Then a woman fainted, I believe, and—that is all, I guess."

"I heard someone say that a little girl was thrown out of the carriage—that's her, isn't it, with the lady on the steps of the Cable Building?—and that a boy saved her."

"Yes, I believe something like that happened."

"How did the runaway occur?"

"The upsetting of the apple cart frightened the horses."

"How came the boy to upset the cart? Did he do it on purpose?"

"No, he couldn't help it."

"Why couldn't he help it?"

"He tripped over another boy's legs."

"You saw the whole thing, did you?"

"I saw most of it."

"I wish I'd seen it. I'm on the street about half my time, and I never see anything."

"Don't worry. You'll see an account of it in the paper. There was a reporter around here a moment ago."

"Was that the reporter you were talking to?"

"It was."

"I thought so. He had a notebook in his hand. Were you giving him points?"

"Yes."

"I think I'd rather be a reporter than a messenger."

"You'd make a good one."

"What makes you think I would?"

"You can ask more questions in five minutes than anyone I know. Come on, are you going back to Wall street?"

"Yep."

The two boys started up Broad street at the very mo-

ment that a couple of men, in response to the lady's request, started to look around for Bob.

One of the afternoon papers had the incident well displayed in its news columns, printing Bob's name in full, and giving a part of the cause that had led to the little girl's mishap.

From this story, which the young messenger read later on, he learned that the name of the little girl he had saved from a fall was Bessie Wood, daughter of Ferdinand Wood, an architect.

Freddy Parks also read the story on his way home, and his eyes opened very wide indeed when he saw that Bob Harker was mentioned as the hero of the episode.

"Why, he never told me anything about his having a hand in it. There must be some mistake, or else—just wait till I see him to-morrow. I'll give him Hail Columbia for keeping me in the dark."

And he did, but before Bob saw him two gentlemen, one of whom he recognized as Wilford Staples, entered the office about half-past nine next morning.

The broker rushed up to him and seized him by the hand.

"Robert Harker, how shall I thank you for saving my little granddaughter yesterday from what might have proved a serious accident?"

"I hope you won't——" began Bob, when the other interrupted him.

"Robert, this is Mr. Wood, my son-in-law and Bessie's father. He has come to express his thanks to you also. Ferdinand, this is the boy who saved——"

"I can't thank you enough, my lad, for your presence of mind," said Mr. Wood, feelingly. "My daughter might have been seriously hurt, or even killed, but for your timely interference in her behalf. Words can't half express my gratitude to you."

Both gentlemen fairly overwhelmed Bob with verbal evidences of their appreciation of the signal service he had rendered them and assured him that they were his friends for life.

Bob declared afterward to Mr. Northrup, when that gentleman spoke to him about the affair, that he didn't mind doing anyone a service, but he hated to be thanked so much for it.

On the following day Bob received an elegant diamond scarfpin from Mr. Wood.

During the next few days there wasn't much doing in the stock market, although a great many shares of L. & D. exchanged hands and the price went up to 58.

On Monday morning, however, the market took a brace, all of the prominent stocks advanced a little, and L. & D. went to 61.

"What did I tell you," said Freddy, beamingly. "Don't you feel sorry now that you didn't go in with me on that stock?"

"How do you know that I'm not in on it anyway?" said Bob.

"Did you buy some shares?"

"I did."

"How many?"

"As many as I could raise the margin to cover."

"Then you got ten or fifteen."

"I didn't get over 50."

Freddy took his reply as a joke.

"Well, hold on for a fifteen-point rise anyway," he said.

"That's what I am going to do, and you'll make a good haul."

"I'll hold on till I think I'd better sell," he said. "Your tip was a pretty good one, Freddy. I wish I had a thousand to put into it."

"Bet your life it was a good one. I wish I had five thousand to put into it."

Next day things began to get lively around the L. & D. standard in the Exchange.

Numbers of brokers had buying orders for the stock, and in their endeavors to get it the bidding raised the price to 66, much to Bob's and Freddy's satisfaction.

Bob called the stenographer's attention to the rise in the stock he had bought.

"I told you I was going to make more than \$250 this trip. So far I'm \$500 ahead. I wouldn't be surprised if I cleared \$1,000."

"I'm glad to hear it," replied Mildred. "You seem to be a lucky boy."

"It's a good thing to be lucky," laughed Bob, walking away.

On Wednesday the excitement connected with the rise increased and L. & D. was quoted at 72 at the close of the day's proceedings.

Next day it went to 80.

On Friday Freddy sold out at 82, clearing over \$300, but the price kept on going up.

When it reached 86 Bob ordered his shares sold.

They fetched 86 3-8, and he realized a trifle over \$1,000.

Then he told his sister about the deal and astonished her with a present of \$100, which was a very welcome addition to her small income.

CHAPTER V.

THE MISSING BROKER.

Bob Harker was now worth something over \$1,200, all made within a couple of months through two lucky deals in the stock market, and he felt proportionately elated.

The next day was Sunday, and he had promised to call at the home of Wilford Staples and take dinner with the family.

When he arrived there he found Mr. Ferdinand Wood, his wife and little Bessie.

He was warmly welcomed, made much of, and seated near the head of the table as the guest of honor.

In fact, as he afterward told his sister, he had a swell time and enjoyed himself hugely.

He showed her a valuable diamond ring that Mr. Godfrey Staples had presented to him in grateful appreciation of the service the boy had rendered him that day in the Mills Building.

Eva Havens and Bob Harker had taken a great shine to each other, though neither was willing to admit the fact.

Bob couldn't very well call in to see her at old Mudgett's office, as he had no business there, but Eva managed to come to Mr. Northrup's office with growing frequency, ostensibly to lunch with Mildred Snow.

The young messenger usually managed to be present while they were eating; that is, unless business called him out of the office, and it was soon patent to Mildred that Eva was the great attraction.

Old Mudgett was considered a crank by his half a dozen employees.

The only way they could get back at him was making fun at him behind his back because of his dudish appearance.

It certainly did look funny for a man of his seventy years to dress as he did, but then that was his business.

He had been in the Street as long as anyone could remember.

Some of the traders said he was the oldest active member of the Exchange.

At any rate, he was the most remarkable figure on the floor.

He was reputed to be worth a number of millions and loaned a good deal of his money out on call.

He was known to be very conservative as to his private operations.

He always refused to take part in any clique to corner a stock, though his funds would have made him a desirable partner in such an enterprise.

His sole and emphatic answer to all such invitations was that he made it a practice to always control his own money, and that he did not propose to involve himself in the financial problems of other people.

Taken altogether, he was a pretty foxy old trader, and when he sold any stock short, if the fact became known, others followed suit, for the market was pretty certain to take a slump on immediate after.

Bob had had a run-in with him once in the corridor on which their offices were located, and Mr. Mudgett had since entertained a standing dislike for the boy.

That furnished an additional reason for Bob to give the old man's office a wide berth, no matter how anxious he might be to make a sly call on Miss Havens.

Mr. Mudgett had one excellent business feature—he never failed to keep an engagement of any kind unless he was confined to his home by illness.

On the Monday following Bob's visit to the home of the Staples Mr. Mudgett failed to show up at his office, although he had a very important engagement with a firm that hoped to borrow half a million from him.

As interest rates happened to be high then, it was pretty certain that the old man wouldn't have stayed away from his office that day if he could by any means have got there.

Mr. Mudgett was one of the few brokers, probably the only one of his class, who did not have telephone connection between his house and his office.

He declared that he had no use for a private wire, for it was only at rare intervals that he was forced to remain away from his office, and on such occasions the messenger service was good enough for him.

He didn't like to talk over a wire anyway—he couldn't hear very well, and he didn't want anybody else to hear for him, even his niece with whom he lived, and who report said had been made his heir because she was willing to remain single and minister to his wants and eccentricities.

The gentlemen who were anxious to borrow the half million even at a high rate of interest called at the appointed hour and were told that Mr. Mudgett had not come downtown yet.

They waited half an hour in vain and then said they would return later.

They came back in an hour, but received the same answer as before.

As time was precious with them, they had to look up the loan elsewhere.

In the meantime some other business exigency obliged the cashier of the office to send a messenger to Mr. Mudgett's house.

He brought back an answer from Miss Henderson, Mr. Mudgett's niece, that the old gentleman had left the house for the office at the usual hour.

The cashier, thinking naturally that something had happened to his employer, communicated with the police, and, subsequently, to make sure that no accident had happened to him, with the hospitals.

The blotters at none of the police stations indicated any intelligence concerning a person answering to the description of the old trader.

The same was true with respect to the hospitals.

Finally a general alarm was sent out from police headquarters at the cashier's request.

Of course every person in the office knew that something unusual must have happened to Mr. Mudgett, and Eva Havens, when she went into Mr. Northrup's to take lunch with Mildred, reported the matter and commented on it, and thus Bob Harker heard about it.

Later in the day Mr. Mudgett's cashier communicated again with Miss Henderson, only to find that the ancient trader had not as yet returned to his home.

Bob learned of this fact through the office boy, whom he met in the elevator about three o'clock.

"I wonder what can have happened to old Mudgett?" he asked Mildred soon after. "Over six hours have gone by since he left his home this morning, and not the least trace has been found of his movements. If he had been taken ill in the train, or in the street, the fact would have

been reported long before this. He has simply disappeared, as if he had vanished off the face of the earth."

"Lots of people have done that," remarked the stenographer. "Sometimes they turn up again weeks or months, or not till years afterward, and then it is discovered that they suffered from a temporary loss of memory which caused them to forget their own identity until recollection returned and they were astonished to find themselves living a different life, maybe in another part of the country. Many such cases have been reported from time to time in the newspapers."

"Mudgett is old enough to go off his mind that way," replied Bob. "Still he is such a remarkable looking old gentleman that I should think he would be noticed anywhere if he was wandering around. The papers to-morrow will be sure to publish the story of his disappearance, and then maybe news will come in from the provinces, that is the country."

The afternoon papers had a brief paragraph to the effect that the old broker was unaccountably missing since leaving his home that morning.

This was repeated in the next morning's papers, one of the "yellow journals" giving some space to the case under the caption of "Mysterious Disappearance of a Wall Street Broker."

Several of Wednesday's papers contained an advertisement offering a reward of \$500 for information leading to the present whereabouts of Broker Mudgett, and the fact was noticed and commented on in the news columns of all the afternoon papers.

The reward was offered by Miss Henderson.

Nothing came of it and the reward was raised to \$1,000 on Friday.

The police of all the nearby cities had been instructed to look out for the dudish-looking broker, whose picture had already been published in the daily press.

There was little doubt but that a great many people were on the lookout to win the reward, for the New York papers carried the news far and wide, while the press of other cities reproduced the story and the offer of reward.

The entire week passed away, and still nothing was heard from or of Mr. Mudgett.

As a consequence business became slack at his office, and Bob ventured to go in there and call on Eva Havens, ostensibly to learn if anything had turned up about the missing broker, but really to have a private chat with his fair charmer.

CHAPTER VI.

A STARTLING ADVENTURE.

The following Monday was a legal holiday, and consequently there was no work in Wall Street.

Bob and Freddy Parks had arranged to take a bicycle trip through a certain part of New Jersey.

They met by arrangement at the Desbrosses street ferry on Sunday morning at nine o'clock, crossed over to Jersey City, and then took their way to the southward at a lively clip.

Their destination was Barnegat Bay, which they did not expect to reach until some time Monday morning, after stopping over all night at a certain town where they expected to find good accommodations at an inn to which they were recommended.

They intended to return Monday night by train.

It was a fine, fairly cool day, the roads were good, and the two boys enjoyed their ride immensely.

They carried their lunch with them, and ate it by the side of the road after they had covered a matter of twenty-five miles.

They arrived at Barnegat village next morning at ten, put up their wheels and got a boatman to row them over to the lighthouse.

They returned to the village in time to have dinner at one and then started to ride around the immediate neighborhood.

"Let's see if we can find that haunted house the landlord was telling us about," said Bob, as they rode leisurely along the lonely road beyond the village.

"I'm not stuck on haunted houses," replied Freddy, not greeting his companion's proposal with much enthusiasm.

"You aren't afraid of a haunted house in the daylight, are you?" laughed Bob.

"I didn't say I was afraid of it," replied Freddy, not wishing to acknowledge his squeamishness in the matter.

"I should hope that you wouldn't be. I don't believe in ghosts myself, either day or night. Even supposing there was such things, how could they hurt you? They are only supposed to be impalpable objects, like a magic lantern picture on a street. There's nothing to them but thin air. You couldn't feel them or grasp any part of them with your hand. You can only feel a material object, and ghosts are, if anything at all, immaterial."

"That's all right, but people are afraid of them just the same," replied Freddy.

"That's merely a kind of inherited feeling. I admit that I wouldn't like to stay all night alone in a house with a dead body, yet common sense tells me that the dead body, even if in lifetime it had been a murderer, couldn't hurt me. How could it?"

"You wouldn't catch me staying in a house, even in the daytime, with a dead person," replied Freddy, with an involuntary shudder.

"And yet a person by constant association with such objects can get used to them. Why, an undertaker told me once that he'd just as soon sleep in the same room with a dozen corpses as not."

"Oh, lor', I don't admire his taste."

"Well, you see he was accustomed to handling them. They were just like so many wooden images to him."

"If I was locked in the same room with a corpse I'd have a fit."

"Don't join the militia, Freddy. You might have to go to war some day, and then, after a battle, you'd see corpses enough to give you a hundred fits."

"I might be one myself by that time."

"It is possible," laughed Bob. "I wonder if that's the haunted house over yonder?"

Bob pointed at an old, tumble-down, two-story and attic house that stood back a little way from the road.

The building had evidently once upon a time been quite a presentable house.

There were traces of a broad driveway in semi-circular shape that communicated with two broken gates.

What had probably been a lawn was now overgrown with rank vegetation.

The fence that enclosed the building was gone to ruin, and back of that was a dense wood.

One of the pipes at the corner of the house connecting with the gutter running under the eaves was broken in the center, and a length of the pipe was missing.

The lower windows overlooking the road were boarded up, and the blinds of the upper ones were closed.

There was a tall chimney on the outside of a rear corner of the building, and midway between it and the front were two windows—one a sashless opening in the garret, with its shutter hanging by a solitary hinge, the other, which lighted a room on the second floor, was filled by broken sashes.

Clearly the house had not been inhabited, at least in a respectable way, for many years.

Bob led the way in through one of the open gates, dismounted and stood his wheel against the fence.

Freddy followed suit and kept close at his companion's heels when he approached the melancholy looking dwelling.

Bob walked up to the front door and tried it.

It was fast.

This circumstance pleased Freddy greatly, as he didn't want to enter the house.

Then they walked around to the side where the two windows were high in the air, and stood contemplating the old ruin.

While they were gazing at a hole under the building a slight grating sound above attracted their attention.

"Oh, lor'!" exclaimed Freddy, "let's get away."

"What for? What are you afraid of?" asked Bob.

"The window is being opened," said Freddy, in some excitement.

"I see it," answered Bob, coolly. "Someone is in there."

"I don't see anybody opening it. It's going up by itself."

"Nonsense! It's only been raised a few inches anyway."

"Oh, crickets! There's something coming out. It's a snake, ain't it?"

"No, it's a man's arm, you chump!" laughed Bob. "He's waving it at us."

"He wants us to keep away. Let's go," said Freddy, starting for the front gate.

"Hold on."

Bob thought the person in the house wanted to say something to them, so he went closer to the side of the building.

As he did so something white fluttered out of the person's fingers.

The breeze caught and carried it toward the rear of the house.

"It's a paper—a message of some kind, I'll bet," breathed Bob, dashing after it.

It was caught by a patch of rank weed and the boy soon secured it.

By that time Freddy was standing wheel in hand in the road.

Bob opened the paper and saw something scrawled in pencil on the inside.

This is what he deciphered:

"I am held a prisoner in this house by a couple of rascals and a boy. Get assistance, come back here and liberate me, and you shall be well rewarded. I am a New York broker, and my name is Andrew Mudgett."

"Gee whiz!" gasped Bob. "Andrew Mudgett here in this house! Can it be possible?"

He looked up at the window, but the arm was gone, and there was no sign there of anyone.

"Mr. Mudgett," he called out, "are you there?"

No answering sign came, though the boy looked sharply at the broken panes.

Then he read the note again to see that there could be no mistake.

He didn't know the broker's writing, but in view of Mr. Mudgett's mysterious disappearance from New York, it seemed as if the key to his unaccountable absence was in his hands.

"I'll get back to the village right away and show this to the constable, if I can find him. It would be a fine thing if I could earn that \$1,000 reward."

Thus speaking, after a last glance at the window, he turned and started for the gate.

Then it was that he saw what seemed to be a stout boy sneaking along under the cover of the fence toward the spot where his companion stood by the side of his wheel.

The chap's actions were so suspicious that he shouted to Freddy to look out.

Freddy didn't seem to comprehend him.

However, before he could make a move, the creeping figure made a sudden rush, darted out at the gate and grabbed the astonished Parks.

That aroused Bob to action.

He wasn't going to stand by and see his friend attacked without making it interesting for the assailant.

Before he could go two feet further he himself was seized from behind by a pair of stout arms and held a prisoner.

Of course he struggled to get loose, but he couldn't.

Squirming his head around he found a heavily bearded face within a few inches of his own.

"Take it easy, young fellow," said the man. "I've got you dead to rights."

"What do you mean by grappling me in this way?" demanded Bob, aggressively.

"What do you mean by nosin' around where you ain't wanted?" asked the man.

"I don't know that it's any of your business," replied Bob. "You don't own this house, I guess."

"It makes no difference whether I do or not. Possession is nine points of the law."

"What has that got to do with me?"

"It ain't got nothin' to do with you."

"Let me go, then."

"Not much. You've put your foot in it comin' here, and here you've got to stay till we let you go."

"I don't know about that," retorted Bob defiantly.

"I do. I'm runnin' things to suit me and my pard, not to suit you. There are reasons why it wouldn't be healthy for you to go back to the village just yet."

"What reasons?"

"One of 'em is in your hand," and the man snatched the slip of paper which had come from the window. "Jest as I thought," he muttered, holding Bob with one powerful arm, while he glanced over the writing. "You've been in communication with the gent in the upper story. That settles your hash for awhile. When we're done with him we'll be done with you and your friend outside. Come along."

Bob resisted, but he was like a child in the iron grip that encircled him.

The man hustled him along toward the end of the house, while the stout boy did the same with Freddy.

There was no help for it, so Bob yielded to the inevitable.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE CELLAR OF THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

He was forced to enter a back door of the reputed haunted house, and was then pushed forward across the floor toward a door, which on being opened by the man looked down into a dark void.

Bob, not liking the looks of the prospect ahead, tried to hold back, but was unable to withstand the force that propelled him ahead.

He was lifted off his feet and pushed downward.

His feet came into contact with a stairway which he couldn't see.

"Walk ahead," cried the man in his ear, and he felt obliged to obey the mandate.

Down he marched much against his will until he came to a board flooring.

Across this he was forced until the man, who seemed to

know the way perfectly well in the dark, came to a stop and tripped his legs from under him, compelling him to slip to the floor.

"Lie still," ordered his captor, kneeling on his chest.

The fellow fumbled around a bit and finally uttered a grunt of satisfaction.

Turning Bob over on his face, he began to bind his hands behind his back with a soft cord.

Then he treated his ankles in the same way.

"You're safe enough now," he said, getting up.

There was a noise on the stairs at that juncture as the stout boy forced Freddy Parks into the cellar in the same way Bob had been treated.

"Fetch him over here," said the man. "I've got rope enough to trice him up, too."

So Freddy was presently lying helpless beside his companion in the dark.

The man and the boy then left the cellar, slamming the door after them and placing a heavy billet of wood against it as an additional precaution.

"Oh, dear," groaned Freddy, in a frightened voice. "What is going to become of me?"

Bob, in spite of his own unfortunate predicament, almost laughed at the dismal expression uttered by his companion.

"Don't give up the ship, Freddy. We aren't dead yet," he said cheerfully.

"Are you there, Bob? What's the reason of all this? Why didn't you come away when I told you to, then this wouldn't have happened."

"Maybe not, but I wouldn't have found out a very important fact," replied Bob.

"What do you mean?" asked Freddy, curiously.

"I mean that I have discovered something that would be probably worth \$1,000 to us if we could reach the village."

"Worth \$1,000?" said Freddy, in surprise.

"Yes. You know that Broker Mudgett has been missing for a week, don't you?"

"Yes."

"And no trace has been discovered as to his whereabouts?"

"Yes."

"And that \$1,000 reward has been offered for information about him?"

"Yes."

"Well, old Mudgett is a prisoner on the second story of this house."

"He is? How do you know?"

"That was his arm you saw out of the window."

"How do you know it was?"

"He dropped a piece of paper down to me."

"He did?"

"Yes. I picked it up and read it. He asked me to go to the village, get help and rescue him."

"Is it possible?" asked the astonished Freddy.

"It's so. I was just starting for my wheel when I saw

a boy creeping up on you. I halloed to you, but you didn't seem to understand me."

"I didn't know what you were trying to get at."

"Then the boy rushed out and grabbed you. I was going to your assistance when a big, strong man came up behind and grabbed me. I tried to get away, but it wasn't a bit of use. He's as strong as an ox, and I was a baby in his grip. You ought to know the rest. We were brought into this cellar and bound, and here we are like two pigs ready for the market."

"What are we going to do?" palpitated his companion.

"I give it up. We'll have to grin and bear it for the present."

"Are they going to leave us alone in this haunted house?" shivered Freddy, who was terrified at the very idea of such a thing.

"Haunted grandmother!" scoffed Bob, impatiently. "This house is no more haunted than any other building."

"But the landlord of the hotel said that it was," persisted Parks.

"Pooh! What does he know about it?"

"He ought to know all about it, for he lives within a couple of miles of it."

"Give a dog or a house a bad name and it will stick to them."

At that moment a mysterious rustling noise at the other end of the room broke in upon their conversation.

"Oh, lor'! What was that?" exclaimed Freddy.

"A rat no doubt. I'll wager there's more than one in this cellar."

"I'm afraid of rats," faltered Parks, nervously.

"I don't fancy them myself. The only thing we can do is to scare them away if they come nosing around us."

During this talk Bob hadn't been idle.

He had been working away at the rope that held his hands.

Although the knots were well secured, and would of themselves have defied his most persistent efforts had he been able to reach them, the rope was soft and yielding, and as the boy had a small hand he at length managed to release one, when the rest was easy.

"Freddy, my boy, don't say a word. I've got my hands free."

"Have you?" cried his companion, hopefully. "Then you can get me loose, can't you?"

"Sure I can, but I'm not going to yet awhile."

"Why not?"

"I have my reasons, so keep quiet."

Bob fumbled in his pocket for his match safe.

Pulling it out, he extracted a match and lit it on the stone wall behind him.

When it blazed up they caught a view of the outlines of their dingy prison.

The cellar extended under the entire house, but was divided in the center by a stone partition, in which was an arched doorway.

The boys couldn't see what was on the other side of the

opening, but Bob was of the opinion that the other half couldn't be much different from the one in which they lay.

The floor beams above their heads were thick with the dust and cobwebs of many years.

There were several dilapidated boxes and light barrels scattered around, as well as a lot of miscellaneous debris.

On the whole, it was not a cheerful place to be confined in, even for a brief interval.

It took several matches for Bob to satisfy his curiosity concerning the place, and then he lay back against the wall and began to consider how he could extricate himself and his companion from their unenviable situation.

His reflections were several times interrupted by Freddy wanting to know why he would not set his hands free, too.

"Because I expect we shall have a visit from our captor before long, and I don't want him to get on to the fact that we have a single chance to help ourselves."

"But he'll see that you've got your hands free."

"No, he won't. At least I don't mean that he shall. When he comes I shall put my hands behind my back, and reintroduce them as well as I can into the rope. He'll never suspect, and when the house gets quiet in the course of time I intend to make a break for liberty and take you with me, of course."

Freddy was obliged to be satisfied with that explanation, though the idea of remaining tied when it was in Bob's power to release him was not at all to his liking.

Bob maintained a steady flow of talk after that in order to keep up his companion's spirits.

Occasionally Freddy would get back to the subject of ghosts, or rats when there was a rustling among the debris of the cellar, so that Bob wondered what would have been his companion's mental condition if it had happened that he alone was shut up in that cellar.

It seemed to them as if they had been there many hours when the door leading to the short flight of steps was opened, and two pair of legs, followed by the rest of the persons' bodies, preceded by a lantern, made their appearance.

"I knew we should have a visitor, though I didn't count on two," said Bob, hurriedly putting his hands behind his back, and leaning, as if half asleep, against the wall.

CHAPTER VIII.

A VISIT FROM THEIR CAPTORS.

Bob now had a better opportunity to observe the general appearance of the man who had captured him, and he was not in the least surprised to observe that he was an individual of formidable physique.

He might easily have passed for a heavy-weight pugilist.

His features were hidden under his heavy beard, which might have been false, though it looked natural enough.

His companion was smoothly shaven, and his countenance was by no means a prepossessing one.

While the chief rascal carried only the lighted lantern, the other bore a battered japanned tray with a couple of plates of food on it and two cups filled with a dark-colored liquid resembling coffee.

The man with the lantern pulled a box forward, and upon its inverted bottom he motioned his associate to place the tray.

"Loosen that chap's arms, Benson," he said, indicating Bob, at the same time putting the lantern on the floor, while he proceeded to attend to the same office for Freddy.

Bob feared that the looseness of the bonds about his wrist would be at once noticed by the man, and would lead to his being tied much tighter after they had eaten the frugal meal brought to them.

To dispel this idea as much as possible he twisted his wrists around the rope, which made it appear to be tight to the man when he started to untie the knots.

Thus the fact that he had got his hands out of the rope escaped the fellow's attention, much to the boy's relief.

"Now, then, youngsters," said the leader, sharply, "look alive. We can't stay down here all night."

As Bob and Freddy were fairly hungry they proceeded to get away with the rude fare on the plates and to drink the coffee.

"I'd like to know what your intentions are toward us," said Bob between mouthfuls.

"Our intentions are to keep you right where you are for the present," replied the chief rascal shortly.

"It's a pretty tough thing to treat us this way when we haven't done anything to warrant it," replied the boy.

"You'd no business to come buttin' around the house."

"I can't see the harm in that," protested Bob. "The landlord of the Barnegat Inn told us this was a haunted house and we wanted to see what it looked like."

"The landlord of the Barnegat Inn is a fool," growled the man. "And you were fools to take stock in what he said."

"We wanted to see the sights while we were down in this neighborhood. That's what we came here for."

"I reckon you've seen more than you bargained for," chuckled the man. "I s'pose you're from New York. What did you come so far from the city for?"

"We came down on our wheels and we expected to go back by a late train this afternoon."

"You'll be disappointed then. The train is gone."

"I don't see what you're going to gain by keeping us prisoners here. You'll only get into trouble in the end."

"Think so?" grinned the man. "I s'pose you know that you've learned somethin' that we don't care to get out."

"What's that?"

"You know well enough. You put your foot in it when you picked up that note the crazy man above tossed down to you."

"Crazy man!" exclaimed Bob.

"Yes, he's daft as a loon. We're keepin' him here for

the good of his health. He escaped from an asylum a little while back, and we don't want to send him back again yet awhile."

The man rattled off the lie quite glibly.

Clearly he was unaware that the boys actually knew Andrew Mudgett.

But it was equally clear that he wasn't taking any chances on the subject.

"Oh, if he's crazy," said Bob, foxily, "then that note I picked up amounted to nothing."

"That's right—it didn't."

"Then what's the use of keeping us prisoners here?"

"Because we don't want the fact to get out that we've got a crazy man in this house."

"Suppose we promised not to say anything about your having a crazy man here?"

"We can't take the chances, young feller."

"Are you going to keep us here until you send him away?"

"That's about the size of it."

"When will that be?"

"Dunno when it will be. It might be several days, or a week, or it might be a month."

"That's hard on us," objected Bob.

"It ain't our fault. If you hadn't come here you wouldn't be in this pickle."

"We're liable to lose our jobs in New York if you keep us prisoners here."

"That isn't our funeral. We'll treat you as well as we can afford to do, for we ain't got nothin' ag'in you."

"You aren't treating us very well if you keep us tied up like we've been since you put us down here."

The man made no reply to this, but seemed to be considering.

"Suppose I let you stay loose, will you promise to make no attempt to escape?"

Bob didn't intend to commit himself to any parol, so he said:

"That's a foolish question. How can we escape from this cellar? It seems to be a stone one."

"That's right, it is. You could try and get out by that door at the head of the stairs."

"I'm afraid you wouldn't give us much of a chance to do that. It's kept locked, isn't it?"

"Sure it is," replied the man, though this was another lie, as the men had no key to lock it with.

However, they could easily fix it so that it could not be opened from the cellar side.

"Well," said the rascal, at last, "we'll tie you up at night and leave you loose durin' the day. That's the best we can do. Are you through?"

As the dishes and cups were empty by this time the question was a superfluous one, and so the ringleader ordered his companion to retie Bob, while he did the same for Freddy, and, after this was done, to take the tray up stairs.

"We'll see you in the mornin'," he said, taking up the lantern.

"Is this the best thing in the way of a bed we're going to have?" asked Bob, referring to the bare floor.

"Maybe I can find a blanket for you; but, you see, we didn't look for lodgers, so you may have to make the best shift you can."

Thus speaking, he followed his companion, leaving the two boys once more in the darkness.

CHAPTER IX.

THE ESCAPE FROM THE CELLAR.

"This is fierce," grumbled Freddy, when they were once more alone.

"It's not over delightful," replied Bob, starting in to try and release his hands again.

In this he had not much trouble, because when the man tied him he had held his wrists in such a way that by reversing them it would loosen the rope.

"I don't know what Mr. Dubois will say when I don't turn up to-morrow."

"Don't worry about your boss. He can get along without you for a day."

"A day! Why, we may remain here a week or a month."

"Not if I can help it we won't. There, my hands are loose again."

"Gee! You're a peach. How do you manage to do it?"

"By a little ingenuity, Freddy," laughed Bob.

"I can't get my hands out to save my life."

"That's the disadvantage of having elephant's feet for hands."

"Oh, my hands aren't so large," said Freddy, objecting to the reflection cast upon their size. "I've seen bigger."

"So have I, but not much."

"You get out. I'll bet my feet aren't as big as yours at any rate."

"We won't argue the matter. Now, Freddy, we must soon make a move to get out of this cellar if we can."

"I'm ready whenever you are. I wouldn't stay here for a farm if I could help it."

"Those chaps, of course, have taken possession of our wheels, and if we get away we'll have to walk back to the village. However, it's only two miles."

"I'd be willing to walk ten miles if I could get away from this place."

"No use making a move for some time yet. Not until the rascals upstairs get to sleep," said Bob.

"They may stay up half the night drinking and playing cards."

"We've got to chance that."

"Do you think we can get out?"

"Ask me something easier. All we can do is to make an effort in that direction."

"And if it doesn't amount to anything, what then?"

"We'll have to accept free board and lodging until they get ready to let us go."

"I don't like that for a cent."

"Neither do I. That's why I'm going to do my best to get out."

At that moment the door above was opened, there was a flash of lantern light on the stairs, and the stout boy who had captured Freddy appeared with a blanket in one hand and the lantern in the other.

He came forward, threw the blanket over the prisoner and then flashed the light in Bob's face.

The light illuminated his face as well.

The result was a surprise for both.

Bob recognized the boy who had thrown the rotten apple at him in lower Broadway, and whom he had heard later on called Pixley by his companion in Broad street. Ben Pixley also recognized the young messenger with whom he had nearly had a scrap.

"So it's you, is it," gritted Ben, hardly believing the evidence of his eyes.

"Yes, it's me all right."

"What are you doin' in this part of the country?"

"I don't think that need worry you," replied Bob, coolly.

"It will worry you a heap before we get through with you," snarled Pixley.

"I won't be worried half as much as you will be as soon as we get set at liberty. So you, a broker's messenger, are connected with those two rascals, eh?"

As one of the rascals, the man with the beard, happened to be Dave Pixley, Ben's father, he resented Bob's speech at once.

We may also remark that Blumstein & Co. had dispensed with his services for good and sufficient cause.

"Who are you callin' a rascal, hang you!" he flared up, giving Bob a smart kick on the thigh.

"You're a brave lad, you are, I don't think," replied Bob, angrily. "You wouldn't dare do that if I was free and on my feet."

"I wouldn't? I'm goin' to give you a chance to-morrow. I'm comin' down here to knock the stuffin' out of yer. And I kin do it, too, if you had two pair of hands, confound yer hide!"

"Come down to-morrow. That will suit me. Give me a fair show and I'll make that face of yours look lopsided."

"I've a good mind to have it out with you now," roared Pixley, in a rage.

"Why don't you? I'd just as soon polish you off now as at any other time."

"Yah!" snarled Pixley, shaking his fist in Bob's face.

"I'd like to smash you."

"I'll bet you're afraid to fight me on even terms," said Bob, aggravatingly.

What Pixley would have done it is hard to say, but at

this moment his father came to the door above and shouted:

"What are you doin' down there, Ben? Come up right away."

"It's a good thing for you my old man called me," hissed Pixley, with a menacing shake of his head. "Never mind; I'll fix yer to-morrer."

He walked away, stamped up the stairs, and banged the door to.

Then the boys heard some heavy object flung against it.

"You two seem to know each other," said Freddy.

"We do," and Bob told his companion how the acquaintance had come about.

"He looks big enough to whip you," said Freddy.

"Maybe he can, but I doubt it. I've taken sparring lessons, and can handle bigger fellows than myself who have no science. Now, Freddy, as I don't think those chaps will bother us again to-night I'm going to get a move on."

Bob took a jack-knife from his pocket and cut his ankles loose.

Then he stood up and stretched himself.

"That's a relief. Now, you stay as you are until I investigate this cellar."

"What are you going to do?"

"Look around."

Bob struck a match, and made straight for the arched opening in the dividing wall.

Passing through, he struck another match and looked around.

This part of the cellar was not as much encumbered with rubbish as was the other, but in the center stood the rusted remains of a hot-air furnace.

A big galvanized cold-air duct led away from it.

It was large enough for a small boy to crawl into.

Bob looked at it with a meditative glance.

Gathering a lot of old paper in a pile he lighted it, and when it flared up he got hold of one of the other big pipes and shook it.

A double length of it came away in his hands, leaving a hole in the brickwork exposed.

Up this Bob thrust a lighted wad of the paper, and judged that it was an inside flue made to carry the hot air up to the floors above.

"I can't do anything in this quarter," he muttered, so he made a tour of the place with his improvised torch.

He found the hole they had been looking at that afternoon.

"Freddy and I can easily enlarge that opening by getting out a couple of the stones, and then we can make our escape. It would be a great thing, though, if I could make my way upstairs and release Old Mudgett, but I don't see any way of doing it."

He returned to Freddy, told him that he saw a fine chance for them to get out of the place, and then cut him loose.

They picked up a lot of paper out of which they manu-

factured rough torches, and thus supplied Bob piloted his companion to the hole under the foundation of the building.

Lighting one torch, Jack with his jack-knife attacked the crumbling mortar of the stone foundation, and in fifteen minutes was able to detach a stone.

Then he allowed Freddy to try his hand.

After an hour's work they had four stones displaced, and all that remained was for them to dig the earth outside away with their hands.

This did not take long, and the way to freedom lay before them.

Bob brought a couple of boxes to the spot to aid them in getting out.

In a few minutes they were standing outside.

"Now, if we only could rescue Mr. Mudgett we should be doing something worth while," said Bob, looking up at the window where the arm had appeared.

"What's the use of talking about that?" replied Freddy, who was impatient to be off. "We're mighty lucky to be able to get away ourselves."

Bob, however, was thinking.

He noticed that there was a big tree near the corner of the house, almost denuded of foliage, the upper end of which hung over the sloping roof of the house.

He believed that if he could reach the roof he could lower himself over the eaves and enter through the open garret window.

Once inside he thought he might be able to communicate with Mr. Mudgett, and perhaps help him to escape.

He outlined his plan to Freddy, but that lad kicked vigorously against the risk involved.

"Well, I'm going to try it anyway," said Bob, decidedly. "I want you to walk back to the village while I'm doing it, and tell the landlord of the inn where we had dinner all the facts of our adventure. Get him to hunt up the constable and his assistants, and steer them back here as soon as you can. If I'm caught you and the villagers will be able to rescue me with Mr. Mudgett. If I'm not caught, and fail to get the broker out of the house, I'll meet you somewhere along the road. Now, get along and hustle for all you're worth."

Freddy was willing to carry out Bob's plans, for it took him away from the scene of danger, and promised some excitement for him.

So, telling Bob to be careful of himself, he started off at a jog trot for the village of Barnegat.

CHAPTER X.

BOB RESCUES OLD MUDGETT.

Left to himself, Bob walked cautiously to a rear window through which he saw a light shining, and peeked in.

He saw a room fitted up with a stove, a table, and four chairs.

There were also other evidences of occupancy.

Around the table were seated Ben Pixley, his father, and the other man.

They were playing cards and smoking.

The illumination was furnished by the simple device of a candle stuck in the neck of a tall bottle which stood in the center of the table.

There was also another bottle that looked as if it contained whisky, and two glasses.

There was some silver money in sight, which showed that the game in progress was not altogether for mere fun.

Bob watched the occupants of the room for a few minutes, and then turned his attention to the tree.

He slowly shinned up the trunk till he reached a crotch about ten feet from the ground, where he stopped to rest.

Then he continued on up.

At a height of thirty feet the heavy branch grew smaller, and began to sag toward the house under his weight.

The higher he went the thinner it became, and the lower it bent.

Bob's feat was an extremely dangerous one, as the tree was more than half dead, and there was every chance that the limb might snap and drop him to the ground before he could reach the sloping roof of the house, in which event broken bones, if not a broken neck, was an almost certain result.

The plucky boy, however, escaped this fate, and finally landed lightly just above the eaves, and being as spry as a monkey, he scrambled to comparative safety.

After a brief rest he succeeded in swinging himself over the end of the building, and in at the open attic window.

He was now in the house.

Lighting a match, and removing his shoes, he found the attic was perfectly bare, with a single doorway opening on a flight of stairs leading to his objective point—the second floor.

Cautiously he descended the stairway that was thickly covered with dust, and when he reached the foot he struck another match which showed him the landing and three doors leading off it.

One of these doors was secured by a heavy bolt on the outside, which was shot.

That was a suspicious circumstance, and pointed to the evident conclusion that it had been put there to lock somebody in.

"I'll bet Mr. Mudgett is in that room," he breathed, as he examined the bolt, which seemed to have been recently affixed to the wood.

The bolt worked easily in its socket, and Bob pushed it back without making a sound.

Then he opened the door and entered the room.

Striking one of his last matches Bob glanced about, and saw the form of a man lying, apparently asleep, on a rude mattress.

Closing the door softly, he advanced to the pallet. As the match expired he laid his hand on the silent figure.

The man started up at his touch.

"Who is there?" asked the voice of Andrew Mudgett.

"Hush!" whispered the boy. "I have come to rescue you."

"Who are you?"

"Bob Harker, messenger boy for William Northrup, of New, York."

The old broker seemed staggered by this unexpected answer, and did not reply for a moment or two.

"Are you really Mr. Northrup's messenger?" he asked wonderingly.

"I am."

"How comes it that you are away down in this part of New Jersey?"

"It would only be a waste of time for me to make an explanation now. I am the boy you threw the written paper to this afternoon."

"Then you've brought help, have you?"

"No. I was captured by the men in this building, and was held a prisoner myself in the cellar until I found a way of getting out. My companion, who was taken with me, has gone to Barnegat village for the constable and others. I thought I would try and get you out before they got here."

"If you managed to get in here without detection you ought to be able to guide me out. Let us go at once."

"I am not sure that we can get out in the ordinary way. I climbed up a tree to the roof, and entered by the attic window. The tree limb has swung back out of reach, and neither of us can get back by the way I came. The two men and the boy are now in the kitchen playing cards. My idea is to slip downstairs and see if I can open the front door without making any noise. If I can then our way out will be clear. Otherwise I'm afraid we'll have to wait until assistance comes."

"Do as you think best, only hurry. I've been confined here a week, and I am heartily sick of the imprisonment."

In order to prevent the broker from leaving the room prematurely, and possibly thereby upsetting the plan, Bob shot the bolt after he left Mr. Mudgett.

Then he cautiously made his way down the stairs to the main hall below.

Here he lit the last but one of his matches, and made out the hall door right in front of him.

There was a key in the lock, and also a bolt.

He shot back the bolt with some difficulty, for it worked stiff, and turned the key.

The door then yielded to his touch, and he looked out into the night.

"Now if I can get Mr. Mudgett down without noise all will be well," he said to himself.

He closed the door and started to remount the stairs

when a door at the rear of the hall opened, and Bob heard the voice of Ben Pixley's father.

Apparently the boy was caught in a trap if the elder Pixley came forward.

That is, unless he could get up the stairs without being noticed.

While the darkness would befriend him, the creaking of the stairway was sure to raise suspicion in the big rascal's mind.

As Bob stood undecided at the foot of the stairs in the darkness, his hand accidentally touched the knob of a door.

Instantly he turned it and the door opened.

This was a fortunate circumstance, as he heard the steps of the man approaching, and saw the flashing of his lantern on the wall.

Bob had just time to enter the room and softly close the door when the father of Ben Pixley appeared and mounted the stairs.

"It's a good thing that I rebolted that door upstairs," breathed Bob. "Otherwise there would have been the deuce to pay."

Pixley, Sr., was upstairs some time.

In fact, he stayed so long that Bob could hardly restrain his impatience.

At length he heard him coming down.

"I hope he won't notice that the front door has been tampered with," said the boy to himself.

Dave Pixley, not having any suspicions with respect to the front door, did not even glance at it, but returned to him companions in the kitchen, slamming the door leading into the hall behind him.

As Bob considered time was precious, he immediately darted upstairs, groped his way to the bolted door, shot the bolt back, and entered the room where Mr. Mudgett had been confined for a week.

"Mr. Mudgett," he said, in a low tone.

The broker, who was sitting on his rude bed, got on his feet.

"Is that you, boy?" he asked, in an anxious voice.

"Yes," replied Bob. "The way is clear for us now. Come."

"I've just had a visit from the rascal who is the head and front of this conspiracy to rob me of a large sum of money."

"I know it," answered Bob.

"I was in a fever of anxiety while he was with me lest you might come back and betray yourself. He stopped a long time, but I was so worked up that I hardly know what he said to me. He must have noticed my perturbation, but I suppose he ascribed it to my growing nervousness over my imprisonment."

"Well, sir, we have no time to lose. Take off your shoes and follow me."

The broker at once obeyed Bob's suggestion, and then, with the utmost caution, they made their way down the stairs to the hall door.

Bob swung the door open, and they stepped outside.

Sitting on the porch, they resumed their footgear, walked to the gate and were soon in the road with their faces turned toward Barnegat.

CHAPTER XI.

BOB INVITES THE TWO GIRLS AND FREDDY TO LUNCH WITH HIM.

"You're a brave boy, Bob Harker," said Andrew Mudgett, as they hurried on their way. "And you won't find me ungrateful for the service you have rendered me this night."

"That's all right, sir," replied Bob. "I am very glad I was able to help you out of your scrape."

"I believe you and I had a little difference in the corridor of a New York building some time ago," chuckled the old broker, as he recalled the circumstance.

"Yes, sir," answered Bob.

"Well, we'll forget it. I did not recognize what an admirable lad you are. You shall have no cause to regret your plucky action in my behalf. You have saved me from becoming the victim of a villainous plot. I was to be kept in that house until I consented to pay well for my ransom. How long I could have held out against those rascals I don't know, but up to the moment I saw you I had no intention of yielding to their preposterous demands."

Bob told Mr. Mudgett of the ineffectual efforts of the detectives for the week past to find a single clew to his whereabouts.

"Your niece, Miss Henderson, offered \$1,000 reward for information leading to your recovery," went on Bob, "so I guess there are a good many people on the lookout to win that money."

"If she has done that the \$1,000 is yours," said Mr. Mudgett. "I shall have the pleasure of adding something to it, as a testimony of my appreciation, too."

"I shall be satisfied to have earned the thousand, sir; but half of it ought to go to my friend, Freddy Parks."

"I will see that he is well remunerated for his share in the matter," said the broker.

At this moment they made out half a dozen persons advancing rapidly toward them along the road.

"That must be Freddy with the constable and his assistants," said Bob.

It proved to be so.

"Is that you, Bob?" shouted Freddy's voice, presently.

"Yes, and Mr. Mudgett is with me," returned Bob.

The parties came together and a consultation was held.

"Are the rascals still at the old house?" asked the constable.

"Yes, and I am pretty sure they have not yet discovered the loss of their prisoners," Bob replied. "They were in

the kitchen at the back of the house when we left by the front door."

"Then we'll get them," said the local functionary.

"Look out for the big chap," said the boy. "He's as strong as two men."

"Lead travels quicker than a man's fists," replied the constable, tersely.

"I'll go back with you if you want," volunteered Bob.

"It isn't necessary, young man. You boys can return to the village with the old gentleman. We're strong enough to capture two men and a boy," said the officer.

"You will find the front door unlocked, if you want to enter that way. In fact, I think that will be the best way to take them by surprise."

"All right," said the constable, who was a stout, determined-looking man.

No further time was wasted.

The officer and his detachment went on, while the broker and the two boys continued toward Barnegat, where they arrived in twenty minutes, and put up at the inn for the night.

An hour later the constable and his posse returned with their three prisoners, who were locked up in the county jail.

Next morning they were brought before the justice.

Bob, Freddy, and Mr. Mudgett were present to give their evidence, which, being irrefutable, the rascals were held to await their removal to New York through the customary requisition proceedings.

Bob in the meantime sent a dispatch to Mr. Northrup explaining the cause of his absence from the office, and also one to Mr. Dubois in behalf of Freddy.

Mr. Mudgett and the boys took an early afternoon train for Jersey City, and arrived in New York by five o'clock.

They were met by several detectives and reporters.

Bob was the story teller, and was accepted as the hero of the occasion.

The morning's papers had the full account of Mr. Mudgett's return to the city, the story of his imprisonment in the old haunted house near Barnegat village, and the exciting adventure of Bob and Freddy, which culminated in the broker's escape from his abductors, and the capture of the rascals concerned in the scheme.

Every broker in Wall street had read the news about Mr. Mudgett's experiences on his way downtown to his office, and as a consequence the old man, who did not fail to appear in his office at his usual hour, held a continuous levee until noon, and received congratulations on all sides.

Bob was the hero of the Street that day, and received the compliments of all the brokers who knew him, as well as of many who for the first time made his acquaintance.

Before Old Mudgett went home for the day he called Bob into his private office.

After a short conversation with him he handed the boy his check for \$6,000.

"There, Harker," he said, "that represents the \$1,000

reward offered by my niece, and \$5,000 from myself. I have sent \$500 to your friend Parks."

Bob was quite overpowered by this liberal present from the grateful broker.

He accepted it with thanks, and next day Mr. Northrup cashed it for him, and he hired a box in the Washington Safe Deposit Co.'s vaults, and put all his funds, now amounting to \$7,200, in it for safe-keeping.

After that Bob felt that he had the freedom of Old Mudgett's office, and he took advantage of the fact to pay an occasional visit to Eva Havens in her own little den off the counting-room, where he was always received with pleasure by that charming young lady, who thought Bob was about the whole thing in the messenger service of Wall street.

On Friday noon of that week Bob invited Miss Havens, Mildred Snow, and Freddy to lunch next day at his expense in one of the nice restaurants of the neighborhood.

"I have so much money now that I want to get rid of a little of it by having a first-class blow-out with my particular friends," he said laughingly to the two girls when he extended the invitation to them, "so I hope you'll honor me with your presence."

"I don't think we ought to encourage you in such an extravagance," said Mildred, with a smile.

"Ho!" grinned Bob, "you don't think I'm going to take you to Delmonico's, do you?"

"I should hope not," answered Mildred. "Eva and I would have a fit if you said you were going there."

"Why, is it too rich for your blood?"

"We haven't the clothes to be seen in such a swell establishment."

"That's the way with you girls—always thinking of clothes," laughed Bob. "I don't wonder that so many of the young men are so skittish about getting married these days. The responsibilities are too much for them."

"Why, the idea! We girls are not extravagant as a rule," said Mildred. "Are we, Eva?"

"I should hope that we are not," replied Miss Havens, with a sidelong glance at Bob.

"When I get married," he said, "there won't be anything too good for my wife."

"Then the girl who marries you will be a lucky woman," put in Mildred.

"I think I'll be a lucky boy if I get the girl I want," he retorted.

"I suppose you have one picked out?" asked Mildred, slyly.

"Maybe I have, but I ain't saying anything about it."

"Which do you prefer—a blonde like me, or a brunette like Eva?"

"You want to know too much, Mildred," replied Bob, diplomatically.

"I think you might tell us that much," purred Miss Snow.

"No, I am not giving all my secrets away," he answered.

"It's my opinion that you lean toward a brunette."

"What makes you think I do?"

"Oh, I have my reasons," laughed Mildred.

"Well, what are your reasons?"

"I'm not telling all my secrets either."

"All right—don't. Now, I want to know if you and Miss Havens are going to accept my invitation to lunch to-morrow after our offices close? Freddy Parks will be one of the party, and he's lively enough for any lunch affair."

"If Eva will go I'll agree," said Mildred.

"Very well," said Bob. "It's up to you, Miss Eva."

Eva didn't know whether she could go or not, but finally allowed Bob to persuade her to come.

"We'll have a bang-up time all by our four selves," said Bob, "and if you'll go I'll take you up to the American League Park to see a ball game afterward."

"That is quite an inducement," smiled Mildred, who had quite a knowledge of baseball, and liked the game immensely.

"I hardly know anything about baseball," said Eva, demurely.

"Leave that to me. I'll explain everything to you," said Bob.

"Will you?" she replied. "How very good of you."

"I shall consider it a favor to do so."

"There, now, Eva, you're in luck. It isn't every boy who would volunteer to do that much for you," laughed Mildred.

Next morning both girls came to their respective offices dressed in their best.

At one o'clock Freddy appeared at Mr. Northrup's, and found Bob and the two fair stenographers waiting for him.

They went at once to the restaurant, and spent something over an hour at the lunch, which was the best the house could furnish.

Bob devoted himself almost entirely to Eva, and Mildred had to content herself with Freddy, who was quite an entertaining young chap in his way.

After lunch they took a subway express for the nearest station to the ball grounds, and Bob bought four grandstand seats.

Here he again monopolized Eva all to himself; but he had a good excuse this time, as he had promised to keep her posted on the game.

The game ended to their satisfaction, for the home team won.

Bob escorted both girls back to the Brooklyn Bridge and there left them, but he had made an arrangement with Eva to call on her next evening, and so he went home feeling unusually well pleased.

That evening he saw in the paper that Ben Pixley had escaped from the officers who were taking him, his father, and the other rascal to the Jersey City jail.

"I guess he's a pretty slick youngster," thought Bob. "But I bet I can whip him in a square set-to."

CHAPTER XII.

BOB MAKES A HAUL IN M. & L.

During the summer Bob found many opportunities to enjoy Eva Havens' society.

Sometimes he and Freddy took her and Mildred to the nearby summer resorts, and sometimes Bob escorted her all by himself, which he much preferred, and perhaps she did, too.

At any rate, they had a good time together on Saturday afternoons, and occasionally of an evening also.

Ben Pixley's father and his pal were tried during the first week in July for abducting Andrew Mudgett, and were convicted and sent to the State prison for the crime.

The market was pretty slow during the warm weather, and most of the brokers spent the larger part of their time out of the city.

One morning about the middle of September Bob and Freddy came together on the street.

Freddy had a small satchel in his hand.

"Say, Bob," said Freddy, in some little excitement, "I've got hold of a bang-up tip."

"Have you?" asked Bob, with a look of interest.

"Bet your life I have. How much will you give to share in it?"

"How much, eh?"

"Yep. You've lots of money, and can afford to pay me something for a good thing."

"You aren't so bad off yourself for a little fellow."

"I've got a thousand dollars, but you have seven times as much," said Freddy.

"Well, what's your tip? If it's good I don't mind making it worth your while to let me use it."

"It's a good one, all right."

"I am ready to hear it."

"Come up on our office corridor, so that the boss, if he's out, won't catch me losing time on the Street."

Bob accompanied him to the second floor of the building where Mr. Dubois had his office, and Freddy took his stand at the junction of the elevator and the stairs communicating with the third floor.

"You know the crowd that boomed L. & D. last spring?" he said.

"Well?" said Bob.

"They're going to boost M. & L. in a few days."

"Sure of that, are you?"

"Yep. Two of them were in the office an hour ago talking to the boss about it, and I overheard enough to put me wise to their purpose."

"Tell me what you heard."

"The boss has got an order to buy all the M. & L. shares that he can find on the quiet, and I guess he's started out to get them. They've already got the price of the stock several points below its usual figure. As soon as they've got hold of all they can pick up on the outside

they will begin to bid for it at the Exchange. Then it will only be a question of a few days before it begins to go up. They expect to make a few millions out of the deal after the general public gets interested. The lambs always pay the piper, you know."

"What is M. & L. ruling at now?" asked Bob

"The last quotation I saw was 57."

At that moment the elevator stopped at the landing, and a pretty young stenographer got out.

She smiled at Freddy, and Parks grinned back at her.

"That's our typewriter," he said to Bob.

Bob glanced at the girl as she started on, but didn't consider her as pretty as Eva Havens.

"Now," continued Freddy, returning to the subject of their conversation, "I want \$100 for that tip. I think I am letting you in mighty cheap."

Before Bob could reply Broker Dunston Dubois, Freddy's employer, suddenly came down the stairs behind the lads.

"You young rascal! Is this what I am paying you for?" exclaimed Broker Dubois angrily, seizing his messenger by the collar and shaking him as a terrier would a rat.

The boy's satchel flew open, discharging a shower of coin.

To say that Freddy was astonished at the unexpected appearance of his boss from an unlooked-for quarter would be putting it quite mildly indeed.

He was simply paralyzed.

Bob was also taken aback, but recovered himself at once, and dropping on his knees began to recover the gold pieces that were scattered all over that section of the floor.

"Don't let me catch you wasting your time this way again," roared the broker, letting go of his office boy. "Pick up your money, and if any of it is missing it shall come out of your wages."

With this parting remark he continued on to his office, leaving Freddy pretty badly broken up.

"Oh, lor!" gasped Freddy to Bob, "to think of him turning up from that direction and me watching for him to come up the elevator. But it's just my luck," he added gloomily, restoring the last coin to the bag with his companion's assistance.

"He seems to be pretty fierce when he gets going," remarked Bob.

"I should say he is. You ought to see him sometimes—he's like a Western cyclone."

"Well, run along, or you'll catch it again, and maybe worse."

So the boys separated, Bob returning to his own office to consider what he would do about the tip he had got from his friend Freddy.

During the afternoon he looked up the recent doings in M. & L., and found that it had dropped steadily from 65 to its present point of 57, within a week.

He had always understood that the stock was a good one, and he judged that it would not go much lower.

"The market ought to begin to pick up about this time.

It's been in the doldrums long enough. I think Freddy's tip is good enough to take a chance on. I guess it will be safe enough for me to buy 1,000 shares. That will leave me \$2,200 to meet any call for additional margin if it should happen to drop four points or so, which I don't believe it will."

By the time he was free to leave the office he had decided to go into the deal to the extent of 1,000 shares, so he got the necessary funds from his safe deposit box and stopped in at the bank in Nassau street on his way home.

"I'd like to buy some M. & L. shares this time," he said to the margin clerk.

"We can accommodate you to the extent of the margin you're ready to put up," responded the clerk, cheerfully.

"Can you?" replied Bob. "Suppose I have \$100,000 to put up?"

"Well," laughed the clerk, "if you've the money with you just dump it on the counter. We'll take all you've got. That's what we're in business for."

"You tell it well. If I showed you \$100,000 you'd drop dead."

"Yes, I think I would if you said that it belonged to you. Well, how many shares of M. & L. do you want to buy? Twenty or thirty?"

"Twenty or thirty! Do you take me for a one-horse operator? I want 1,000."

"You want how many?" asked the clerk, regarding him with a quizzical smile.

"One thousand shares. Are you hard of hearing?"

"No, my hearing is pretty good. I presume it is one of your jokes."

"No, I'm not joking when I talk business. I want you to buy me 1,000 shares of M. & L. at the market, which happens to be 57. Here is the margin as I figure it," and Bob produced a roll of bills. "Count it and see that it's right."

The clerk was surprised, but his impression was that the boy was making the deal for some moneyed friend.

"Do you want the ticket made out in your own name?" he asked.

"Whose else's? Aren't I doing the business?"

The clerk said nothing more.

It was nothing to him whose money was figuring in the matter so long as the amount was all right, so he handed Bob his memorandum, and the deal was made.

Next day M. & L. dropped a full point, but recovered half of that by the time the Exchange closed.

Two days afterward the stock took a brace with a stiffer market, and went up to 58.

In the meantime Bob had met Freddy and told him he would give him the \$100 for the tip.

"I've bought 175 shares," said Freddy, complacently. "I'd buy twice as much if I had the money to cover the margin."

"I can let you have the \$100 this afternoon if it will do you any good," said Bob.

"I'll take it, but I don't know as it will help me to get

any more shares. Have you bought any yourself yet?"

"Yes."

"How many shares?"

"I've bought 1,000."

"Gee! You'll win a boodle."

"I hope so, but I never count my chickens until they're hatched."

"They'll be hatched all right, don't you worry. If I had 1,000 shares I'd look out for a new boss as soon as I cashed in."

Bob laughed and said good-by.

On Saturday M. & L. closed at 59.

On Monday it went to 61.

When Bob and Freddy met at a quick-lunch counter that day they shook hands over the bright prospects ahead for them.

Next day M. & L. got quite lively, and began to attract considerable attention, with the result that it went still higher, closing at 64.

"This begins to look like business," said Bob to himself. "I'm about \$7,000 ahead so far. I wonder how high it will go?"

Next day there were a lot of buying orders for M. & L. in the pockets of the brokers when they went to the Exchange, which caused quite a lively bidding for the stock.

As the syndicate had by this time gobbled up about all that was to be had, the scarceness of the stock gave the price a boom, and it went to 70 by three o'clock.

Bob and Freddy were in high glee, but neither showed any disposition to sell their holdings as yet.

"The fun is only just beginning," said Freddy.

"Maybe it is, but I don't think I'll hold on any longer when it gets to 75."

"Are you really going to sell at 75?"

"I don't know, Freddy. It hasn't got to 75 yet."

"It will reach that before to-morrow noon by the way things are going."

"I think so myself, but still you never can tell what's going to happen in the stock market. It's like climbing a greased pole—you never can be sure where you are at."

Freddy proved to be a good prophet when he said M. & L. would reach 75 by noon next day.

In fact, it did better than that—it was up to 76.

It closed at 77 3-8, and at that figure Bob gave his order to sell.

Freddy held on until it reached 80 1-8, and got out with a whole skin, and \$3,900 profit.

As for Bob, he cleaned up \$20,000 on the deal, and was thoroughly satisfied.

CHAPTER XIII.

BOB PICKS UP ANOTHER TIP, AND GOES INTO P. & T.

Neither Mildred Snow nor Eva Havens knew about Bob's last deal in the market.

They knew, however, that he had made something over \$1,200 in his first two speculative ventures, and they were also aware that Mr. Andrew Mudgett had presented him with \$6,000 out of gratitude for his services in rescuing him from the hands of his abductors.

Bob decided to tell Eva about his winnings in M. & L., as he now had no secrets from that young lady, but he insisted that she keep the fact quiet.

She was much astonished to learn how much he had made in that one deal.

"You are certainly uncommonly smart, Bob," she said, after he had told her. "I really don't see how a boy like you could make so much money in the market. Older and more experienced persons than you are losing money every day in the Street."

"That's right, they are; but you see I've been operating with inside information, which makes all the difference in the world."

"How do you manage to get your inside information?"

"I got two good tips from Freddy Parks. He seems blessed with ears that reach all around his boss's private office. I can't say that I approve of Freddy's methods, but it's his funeral, not mine. Some day his employer will get on to him, and then it will be all day with Freddy. However, he isn't worrying much on that score, as he's worth \$5,000, and he acts as if he didn't care whether school kept or not."

"Did he make it all in the market?"

"That's what he did. Freddy is about as clever as they come."

"He must be, and he's younger than you, too. Do you think of becoming a broker some day yourself, Bob?"

"Yes, that's my ambition. I think it's a business that just suits me."

"If you succeed as well as you've started in you ought to become rich."

"I hope to. It takes money to make the mare go. There's your bell. Mr. Mudgett wants you, so I'll have to get back to my office."

Bob got back just in time to answer a call from his own employer.

"Take this letter to Mr. Mason, and bring the answer to the Exchange," said Mr. Northrup.

Mr. Mason was a broker in the Vanderpool Building, and Bob lost no time in delivering it at his office on the fourth floor.

The broker read the note, scribbled a reply, which he enclosed in an envelope and handed to Bob.

The young messenger at once made a bee-line for the New street entrance to the Stock Exchange.

Making his way to the rail, he told an attendant that he wanted to deliver a note to Mr. Northrup, so the man went off to hunt him up.

The other messenger boys were standing at the rail talking in eager tones.

"Are you sure he said that a combination had been formed to boost P. & T.?"

"Dead sure. I was standing right back of them at the time, and they never paid the slightest attention to me, but went right on talking."

"What else did he say?"

"He said that Wilford Staples was going to do the buying and booming, and had orders to begin right away."

"Are you going to risk any money on the tip?"

"Bet your life I am. I'm going to buy five shares right away. It's going at 61, and it will be up to 70 before the week is out, see if it isn't."

"You know the men were brokers, do you?"

"Yes. The man who did most of the talking was Tom Harvey, and the other was Austin Ford."

"Did Harvey say how he got the pointer himself?"

"No; but he seemed to know all about the deal."

"All right. I'll buy some shares of P. & T. myself. I guess it's safe enough to take a chance with."

"It's safe, don't you worry," replied the other.

Just then the broker for whom one of the boys had brought a note came up and took it, and then both messengers left.

Bob had heard the whole of the conversation, and it started him thinking about the matter involved.

"I must look into this thing," he said to himself. "If P. & T. is going to be boomed I want to be in on it, too."

At that moment his eye rested on the P. & T. standard, and he saw Mr. Staples, with his hat on the back of his head, making bids for something which he naturally presumed to be P. & T.

He exchanged memorandums with several brokers while Bob stood at the rail waiting for Mr. Northrup to show up.

At length his employer came to the rail, took the note, read it, and nodded to the boy as a signal that he could return to the office.

When he turned out of New street into Wall a cab came along.

Bob saw that the occupant of the vehicle was Mr. Godfrey Staples, who was doubtless on the way to his son's office in the Mills Building.

The old gentleman saw Bob and told the driver to stop alongside of the curb.

"Good-morning, Robert," he said, holding out his hand to the boy.

"Good-morning, Mr. Staples," replied Bob, shaking hands with him. "You're looking well to-day."

"I am feeling all right. My sojourn in the country has made a new man of me."

"Have you come down to keep your eye on the market?"

"Yes. I don't seem able to keep away from it altogether."

"I just saw your son in the Exchange around the P. & T. standard."

The old gentleman smiled shrewdly.

"I was thinking of buying a few shares of P. & T. myself," went on Bob, innocently, "just for a little excitement."

"I hope you're not getting a touch of the Wall street fever, Robert," said Mr. Staples, with a deprecating shake of his head.

"I don't think there's any harm in taking a shy at the market once in a while if you happen to have a good thing in sight," replied Bob.

"There is a great deal of harm in it for a boy like yourself. In the first place you're almost certain to lose your money."

"Why, some months ago I bought ten shares of O. & S. on margin, and made \$250."

"You were very fortunate to come out ahead. How came you to buy the O. & S. shares?"

"I got an idea in my head that the stock was going to rise, just as I have an idea that P. & T. is going to be higher in a few days."

The old gentleman looked at him sharply.

"What has given you the impression that P. & T. is going to advance?"

"Well, I saw your son buying it from several brokers, for one thing."

"That's a very poor reason. He is probably buying to fill orders he has."

"The people who want it wouldn't buy it if they had any idea it was going down."

"People who buy stock are merely betting on the chance of it going up. There is no certainty in the matter at all."

"That's true, sir, unless they have inside information."

"Only the favored few have that," replied the old gentleman.

"Then you wouldn't advise me to buy any P. & T.?"

"I advise you to have nothing whatever to do with the market."

"But I want to make a stake for a certain purpose, sir. P. & T. is going at 61. I feel it in my bones that the stock will be much higher before this time next week. Of course, if you advise me not to buy it I'll look around for something else."

The old gentleman looked searchingly at Bob.

"Will you promise not to go into the market after this one time if I give you a quiet tip which I shall expect you to keep entirely to yourself?"

"I'd rather not make any promises, sir, even to get a tip, for something might turn up that would perhaps make me regret I had done so, and if I had passed my word I'd feel bound to keep it."

"I see that you and I will have to have another talk on this subject," said Mr. Staples. "In the meantime, if you are fully determined to invest your little money in the market you won't go wrong by buying P. & T. I happen to know myself that it will go up in a day or so, and will probably reach 70 by Monday. You will be safe to hold on till it reaches 80, when you had better sell. Remember, Robert, you must not on any account mention what I have told you. I have given you this tip because I owe you some substantial return for your kindness of the past. I hope this will be your last venture on the market,

for to speculate in Wall street is like playing with fire in a tinder box—you are almost certain to be burned."

Mr. Staples said good-by and motioned his driver to proceed, while Bob went on to the office.

That afternoon he bought 4,000 shares of P. & T. at 61.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REAPPEARANCE AND FINAL EXIT OF BEN PIXLEY.

That evening after supper Bob's sister went out, as she sometimes did, to fit a dress on a customer, and the boy was left alone in the flat.

He took up a book to read, but hardly had finished a page before there came a knock at the door.

Supposing it was the lady who lived across the corridor, who was on very friendly terms with his sister, he opened the door without any hesitation.

A man and a stout boy stood outside, the youth having a green shade over his eyes.

"Well, what do you want?" asked Bob, regarding the visitors with suspicion.

"We want somethin' to eat," said the man.

"I'm afraid that I can't——"

Before he could get any further the man suddenly jumped on him and seized him by the throat, forcing him back into the room.

His companion quickly followed, closing and locking the door.

"Get a towel," said the man to his associate, as he shoved Bob down on the lounge and held him there in spite of his struggles to get free.

The boy with the green shade fetched a couple of towels which he found hanging in the little kitchen.

With these Bob was speedily gagged and bound.

The man went through his pockets and found several dollars which he appropriated.

Leaving his companion to keep an eye on the young messenger, he began to search the rooms for plunder.

Bob felt that he could do nothing to save his sister's property, so he lay and stared at the young rascal whose face was partially obscured by the green shade.

There was something familiar about the youth that caused him to think that he had met him before.

Suddenly the truth flashed across his brain.

This was Ben Pixley, who had escaped from the officers some months before while en route from Barnegat village to Jersey City.

This knowledge of the youth's identity, however, didn't do him any good.

It only caused him to chafe the more under the restraint which had been put upon him.

At that juncture the electric bell in the kitchen rang out sharply.

That indicated a caller, for it was too soon for his sister to return.

Bob guessed it was Freddy, who had told him that he might call that evening.

The ring had startled both the rascals.

The man re-entered the room and turned the gas low as the bell rang again.

Then they stood near the door and awaited further developments.

In a few minutes somebody came springing up the stairs, and then there came a sharp knock on the door.

Bob felt that Freddy was outside, and determined to give him some hint that something was wrong inside.

He was gagged and his arms were bound behind his back, but his legs were at liberty.

He jumped to his feet and kicked a small padded stool across the floor toward the door.

Before either of the rascals could stop it it had banged up against the door.

The person outside heard it plainly enough, for he seized the knob of the door and tried to open it.

The youth with the green shade sprang at Bob, but the latter eluded him and rushing into the kitchen managed to shut the door with a bang.

He put his back against it, and braced his feet against the stationary dresser.

This afforded an effectual barrier between him and the rascals in the sitting-room.

Then he devoted his attention to freeing his hands from the towel, which he soon accomplished by persistent effort.

To tear the gag from his face was but the work of a moment.

The rascals had made a futile effort to push in the door, and finally desisted.

Bob turned the key in the lock, and then, opening the dumbwaiter, he pounded on the opposite door.

The lady came to the waiter, and Bob startled her with a hurried statement of affairs in his own flat.

"Is your husband in?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered.

"Let him go to the hallway door and see if there is a boy standing there. If there is it is probably a friend of mine named Freddy Parks. Ask your husband to tell him to go downstairs and send the janitor up with his revolver, and then go after a policeman."

The lady said she would tell her husband, and left the dumbwaiter for that purpose.

In the meantime the rascals held a consultation, and not liking the look of things, decided to leave the flat while there was a chance of their doing so without being caught.

So they unlocked the door and made a sudden dash for the stairs, upsetting Freddy Parks, who stood in their way just as the husband of the lady next door appeared on the landing.

The boy with the green shade didn't get off as easily as he expected, for he tripped over Freddy, and struck his

head a whack against the base of the ballusters that made him see numerous stars.

Before he could get up the man from next door had him by the collar.

The green shade had fallen off and revealed to the surprised Freddy the remembered features of Ben Pixley.

Freddy then rushed into the Harker flat and looked around for Bob.

Bob was just opening the kitchen door, as he had heard the racket, and suspected that the two rascals were trying to make their escape.

"Come here, Bob," palpitated Freddy. "Come out on the landing and see who has been caught."

"It's Ben Pixley, I'll bet a dollar," he replied.

"That's just who it is. He fell over me after the man who was with him knocked me over with a rush. Before he could get up Mr. White had him by the jacket."

The two boys ran out on the landing, where they found that the man who lived next door had subdued his prisoner, and was holding him on the carpet.

"Wait a moment, Mr. White," said Bob. "I'll get some cord and tie his hands and feet."

Bob soon had Ben Pixley reduced to a state of helplessness.

"Now, Freddy, run and get a policeman," he said, and Freddy lost no time in starting off on his errand.

"What have you got to say for yourself, Ben Pixley?" asked Bob.

Ben favored him with an ugly scowl, but said nothing.

"You made your escape some way from the officers in New Jersey, but you won't be likely to repeat your success in New York. I see your finish this time."

Another scowl from Pixley.

"How came this chap and his pal to get in your flat, Bob?" asked Mr. White.

"They knocked on the dining-room door, just after my sister went out to call at the house of one of her customers. I thought it was your wife, and opened the door. They had me done up in a moment. If it hadn't been for the fact that my friend Parks came along there might have been a different story to tell."

"You seem to know this chap."

"I do. He used to be a Wall street messenger. He was one of the gang that abducted Andrew Mudgett, the broker, some months ago. You remember the case, don't you?"

"Oh, yes. It was the one in which you figured so prominently in the papers."

"That's right. Parks was with me at the time. This lad escaped from the officers who were escorting him, his father and the fellow named Edwards to the Jersey City prison."

"I remember that you told me something about it at the time. He's a slippery rascal, evidently."

"His slippery days are over for a while, I'll bet."

Steps were now heard on the stairs, and Freddy appeared with a policeman.

Bob gave Pixley in charge, and locking the flat up he and Freddy accompanied the officer and his prisoner to the station.

Harker told his story to the sergeant in charge, and Ben was locked up for the night.

Next morning he was brought before the magistrate of the Harlem police court, and on Bob's evidence was sent to the Tombs prison.

In due time he was tried, convicted, and sent to the Elmira Reformatory for a term of years, and on the whole he didn't get any more than was coming to him.

CHAPTER XV.

BOB REACHES THE \$100,000 MARK.

On the morning following the capture of Ben Pixley, Bob telephoned his office that he would not get downtown until late owing to the fact that he would have to appear at the Harlem police court.

When he did get down he explained matters to Mr. Northrup when he saw him.

He also went into Mr. Mudgett's office, and told the old broker that young Pixley had been caught and was now at the Tombs.

Then he ran in and saw Eva a few minutes, and told her of the exciting event which had happened in his sister's flat.

"If it hadn't been for Freddy," said Bob, "we'd probably have been cleaned out and the rascals would have escaped. As it is, we lost nothing, and though the man got off we have Ben Pixley all right, and he was one of the chaps implicated in the abduction of Mr. Mudgett."

Bob kept his eyes on the ticker that day whenever he got the chance to look at the tape, and though a great many shares of P. & T. changed hands, the price was not materially affected.

Next day the stock advanced a point and a half, and that was equivalent to a profit of \$6,000 for Bob, which was quite satisfactory to him.

"I wonder what old Mr. Staples would say if he knew I was able to buy 4,000 shares of P. & T.? No doubt he thought that fifty or sixty shares would be about my limit," thought Bob, with a chuckle. "I'm liable to make \$50,000 out of this deal, or even more than that. Let me see. Mr. Staples told me to sell out at 80, which is a pretty good sign the stock will go to that figure. That would mean a profit of \$75,000 for me. At that rate, I can calculate that I will soon be worth \$100,000. That's a pretty tidy sum for a boy of my age. I think sis could afford to give up dressmaking for good and all, and live like a lady herself."

"Freddy," said Bob, when he met Parks next morning, "why don't you buy P. & T.? I believe it's a dead sure winner."

"What makes you think it is?"

Bob told him about the conversation between the two messenger boys he had overheard in the Exchange."

"Looks good; but is it?"

"Well, I saw Mr. Staples buying the stock as fast as he could pick it up."

"Are you going to take a chance with it?"

"I've already taken a chance."

"Have you? How many shares did you buy?"

"I bought all I could afford."

"That must be more than a thousand."

"It was."

"What is it going at now?"

"I think the last quotation I saw was 62 5-8."

"What did you give for yours?"

"I gave 61."

"Then you are ahead of the game already. I guess I'll go into it."

"I would. You won't regret it."

"I'll buy 500 shares, and that will take only three-fifths of my funds. So if it should happen to go down I can make good a call for additional margin."

"That's a sensible way to look at it, but I don't think it will go any lower for the present. I expect to see it reach 70 by the first of next week."

Freddy was impressed by the possibilities of P. & T., and he bought 500 shares, which cost him 62 7-8.

During the next two days the stock went up very slowly to 65.

On Saturday it closed at 66.

On Monday the entire market opened strong, and everybody seemed to be in the buying mood.

The dearth of sellers stiffened prices all along the line, and it wasn't long before P. & T. had climbed up to 70.

As business was looking up among the brokers Bob was on the wing more than two-thirds of his time, and consequently had very little chance to look up his particular stock on the tape during the business hours of the Exchange.

Freddy was likewise kept on the go, and neither had a chance to go to lunch these days till three o'clock.

If they got particularly hungry while they were out, and felt they could skin a few minutes, they'd go into a quick-lunch house and swallow a sandwich and a cup of coffee.

When they met they merely exchanged a word or two as they passed, and kept right on their way, for nearly every message was important, and could not be delayed.

The girls, too, were busy, and so were all the clerks in the counting-rooms, who found they had to work overtime to keep up with the flow of business.

Things grew more lively as the week went on, and every day marked higher prices in stocks, P. & T. rapidly nearing the 80 mark.

At length, on the following Thursday, after an exciting five-hour session on the Exchange, P. & T. closed at 80 5-8.

Bob saw this quotation when he came in from an errand at 3.20.

"P. & T. looks good for ten points more, but I'm going to take Mr. Staples's advice and sell out right away. I see my \$75,000 profit in sight now, and I'm not going to spoil a good thing by holding on too long. Enough is as good as a feast, especially when there's no dependence to be put in the feast. I must persuade Freddy to sell, too. I wouldn't like to see him caught at the eleventh hour."

As soon as Bob got off for the day he rushed around to the office of Mr. Dubois, where he found his friend about ready to go home for the day.

"Hurry up, Freddy. I'm going around to the bank to order my stock sold. You'd better fall in line, too."

"Oh, come off, you aren't going to sell out when the shares are on the road to par."

"On the road to your grandmother. P. & T. will not see par this trip, if it ever does. Put on your hat and come along."

"I'm not going to sell my shares short of 90," said Freddy, as they walked out of the office.

"If you're going to wait for that figure you'll find yourself in the soup."

"Ho! What makes you think so?"

"Well, I had a tip to sell at around 80 from a man who is close to the clique that is booming the stock."

"Who was it?"

"I can't tell you who it was, and it wouldn't do you any good to know. But I have confidence in his advice, and I'm going to be guided by it. You are now 17 points and a fraction to the good. That's a matter of \$8,500 profit. Better make sure of it while you can."

"I figured on making \$10,000."

"No matter what you've figured on making. The best-laid plans often go up the spout. Sell out this afternoon, and you're reasonably sure of a good haul, unless the market should go to pieces at the opening of the Exchange tomorrow, which is hardly likely."

By this time they had reached the little bank in Nassau street, and only just in time to do business.

Bob pushed up to the window and told the margin clerk to sell him out at the market in the morning.

His request was duly recorded, and he turned to Freddy.

"Now, then, get busy and hand in your order."

Freddy wasn't anxious to do it, but Bob persuaded him to do it, and he did.

"If P. & T. goes to 85 or 90 I'll feel like kicking you," he said.

"It may go to 85, though I doubt it; but I wouldn't chance it even to win \$20,000. It's altogether too risky a proposition, especially for you and I, who are so busy these days, and in no position to keep a watch on the way things are going."

"I guess you're right, Bob. On the whole, I'm glad I've ordered my shares sold."

He was several times more glad next day about noon,

when he heard that P. & T., after going to 83, had gone to pieces under pressure.

"I'd have been caught only for Bob," he said to himself. "Next time I won't haggle over any advice he may offer me."

When the boys got their statements they found their shares had been sold at 81 1-8.

Freddy was richer by \$9,000, while Bob had made nearly \$80,000, and was worth in round numbers about \$107,000.

The \$7,000 he took home with him that night, and made a present of it to his astonished sister.

"There now, sis, don't say I never gave you anything."

"My gracious!" she exclaimed. "Have you been making more money in stocks?"

"That's what I have. I am now worth an even \$100,000."

But his sister couldn't believe it until he showed her his statement from the bank.

"There's the evidence, and they say figures don't lie. At any rate, I can swear that those figures tell the solemn truth."

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCLUSION.

"We are the people, Bob," said Freddy Parks, when he and his friend congratulated each other over their winnings in P. & T. "I am worth fourteen thousand plunks, and the best of it is not one of my folks thinks I'm worth more than \$100. I'm going to give them the surprise of their life some day."

"Why don't you tell your people?" asked Bob.

"I want to wait till I'm worth about \$25,000. That will make my governor stare."

"But it may be a long time before you reach that figure. The next deal you go into might give you a set-back."

"I'll take care only to go into a pretty sure thing."

"You mean that you won't touch the market till you get hold of another tip?"

"That's it, and then I'll only put up about half my funds. I don't believe in taking too many chances."

"I'm glad to hear you say so. I had all I could do to get you to sell out P. & T. the other night in time to save you from next day's slump."

"I was foolish, but I'm going to be wise after this. The more money I have the harder I feel like holding on to it. It would break me up to lose that \$14,000 in any deal."

"The best way to keep it is not to risk it. You could loan it out at 5 per cent a year. That would give you an income of \$700, or nearly twice as much a week as you're getting from Mr. Dubois for your services as messenger."

"If you loaned your money out at that rate you'd earn \$5,000 a year. If I was in your shoes I'd quit the market for good, and not take any more chances."

"I disagree with you, Freddy. I think I've money

enough to speculate with successfully when I see a good chance—that is, on the slow and sure principle.”

The boys were on their way home, and they argued the matter until Freddy left the train one station south of Bob's destination.

“What are you going to do with that \$7,000 I gave you, Edith?” Bob asked his sister that evening at the supper table.

“I'm going to give up dressmaking and buy a cosy little two-family house in the Bronx. By renting half of it I guess we could meet our expenses.”

“You have an eye to business, I see, like myself.”

“Yes, I think the plan I have mentioned is the most sensible one I could adopt, don't you?”

“I think it's all right. You ought to be able to get a good house for that amount of money if you don't pick out a too expensive neighborhood.”

They talked the matter over for an hour, and then Bob went out to call on a friend in the next block.

On the following Sunday Bob took Eva Havens up to Bronx Park after she had called at the Harker flat and had dinner with the brother and sister.

They strolled around the park for an hour or so, and finally sought a secluded nook where there was a bench.

Here they talked together in low tones on subjects of special interest only to their two selves.

Bob now felt that he was pretty solid with Eva—at any rate, she went out with nobody else, and always seemed glad to have him call at her house, which he made a point of doing once a week.

While they were talking together on the bench Bob suddenly became conscious that two men had come to that locality, and stopped just on the other side of the bushes which screened the bench in a kind of green bower.

Presently the drift of their conversation became apparent to him.

They were talking about two railroad companies, hitherto rivals, that had come to an amicable arrangement to pool their freight and passenger traffic, quit cutting rates, and to raise their tariff charges.

The securities of both roads had been at a low price for a long time on account of the financial difficulties into which this ruinous competition had forced the companies.

In fact, it was rumored about the financial district that one of the roads would soon be forced into a receiver's hands.

This unfortunate state of affairs was now relieved by the mutual agreement in question, which was bound to lead to the rehabilitation of both roads, and advance the value of their stock and bonds.

“The shares of both roads are bound to go up at least ten points when this news gets out,” said one of the unseen speakers. “At present the D. & W.'s stock is going begging at 40, while the I. & N. is a slow seller at 45. We must load up on both, Henshaw, at once, for the confirmation of the deal will soon be publicly announced, and then there will be a rush on the part of brokers and

the general public to gobble up all that's in sight. The shares may even go to 60 in the first flurry, perhaps higher, but, of course, will settle down to about 50 for D. & W., and 56 or so for I. & N.”

“I'm with you, Withers,” replied Mr. Henshaw. “We should make a good thing out of this bit of inside information. It's too bad we haven't more money to invest. And there isn't time enough to raise a loan on our real estate.”

“We've got a bunch of gilt-edge securities that we can hypothecate for the time being. It's true they don't belong to us, but that doesn't matter, as we will be able to recover them inside of a couple of weeks, and no one will be the wiser.”

“It will be safe to use them, I guess. I also control about \$100,000 worth of Boston City 5's, left to my niece by her father's will. I'll raise \$65,000 on them easily enough.”

“You're lucky. I wish I was some wealthy girl's guardian, too, at this moment.”

The voices then grew less distinct, which showed that the two men, who probably were Wall street brokers, were walking away from the spot.

“Well,” said Bob, in a tone that betrayed not a little excitement, “did you hear what those men said?”

“Every word,” replied Eva.

“And you must know that we have accidentally acquired a first-class tip on the affairs of two railroads whose securities are bound to go up, as those gentlemen said, as soon as the news of the peace arrangements are made public.”

“It would seem so,” said the girl.

“Now I think here is a chance for me to more than double my \$100,000,” went on Bob, eagerly. “The shares of both roads will certainly advance ten points as soon as the news gets out on the Street. I could buy 10,000 shares of the stock of each road on margin. That would cost me \$95,000, with a profit of \$200,000 in sight.”

“My gracious!” exclaimed Eva, with sparkling eyes. “Are you really going to do it?”

“I think I will after I have looked the matter up.”

“Why, you'll be worth a mint of money by and by.”

“I hope so, but I shan't enjoy it unless——”

“Unless what?”

“You promise to share it with me, Eva, some day.”

The fair stenographer looked down at the grass and blushed deeply.

“Do you care enough for me to promise to marry me some time?” he asked.

It was some moments before Eva answered, and then she said “Yes” very low.

That was enough for Bob, who put his arms around her and kissed her.

They were as happy as two turtle doves after that, and both forgot all about the valuable pointer that had come to them a little while before.

Next morning Bob began to make some inquiries about the two Western roads in question.

He found there were rumors of a deal between the companies floating about the Street, but nothing definite had come to light.

That afternoon he bought 2,000 shares of each of the roads on the usual margin at the little bank in Nassau street, and he induced Freddy to buy 1,000 shares of each.

They got the D. & W. at 40 and the I. & N. for 45.

Next day Bob went to a big brokerage house and bought 5,000 shares of D. & W.

On the following day he bought 5,000 shares of I. & N. from another broker.

The price on each was the same as on the preceding day.

Next morning the newspapers announced the consummation of the deal between the two roads, but the intelligence was unofficial.

Nevertheless, the mere announcement, unconfirmed as it was, caused considerable excitement around the standards of the two roads, and considerable activity in the shares was the result, each advancing a point.

That afternoon Bob put practically the rest of his money into 3,000 shares of each road at the advanced figure.

It was a tremendous deal for a boy to engage in, but he had the courage of his convictions, and did not feel a bit uneasy over the ultimate result.

Freddy, on the strength of another conversation with Bob, purchased 500 shares more of each of the stocks.

Then both boys, with all their money at stake on the turn of Fortune's wheel, lay back on their oars and watched for results.

Next day was Friday, and the Street was full of the deal between the two roads, but there was as yet no official confirmation of it at the offices of either road.

Lots of brokers and outside speculators, however, seemed confident that the intelligence was true, and backed their views with cash, so that a lot of business was transacted in the shares, and the price went up another point.

On the following day the Exchange had hardly opened for business when the news of the pooling arrangement between the two roads was officially confirmed.

Then there was a mad rush to get some of the stock, and D. & W. advanced to 46, and I. & N. to 52 by the time the chairman's gavel fell at noon.

Bob spent Sunday with Eva at her home, as it was too chilly to go anywhere.

They could hardly talk of anything but the money that the young messenger expected to make out of his big deal.

Next day both D. & W. and I. & N. opened seven-eighths of a point higher than on Saturday, and by three o'clock the former was going at 55 and the latter at 62.

There was tremendous excitement all day at the Exchange, and this increased to fever heat on the following day, when the roads advanced five points more.

The boys, after a consultation, decided to sell out their

holdings right away, as there was likely to be a decline at any moment.

Bob went around to the different brokers with whom he had made deals, and ordered them closed out.

He then accompanied Freddy to the bank in Nassau street, and both closed out their holdings there at next morning's market price.

The sales were made at figures that netted Bob something over \$400,000, and Freddy \$39,000.

Thus Bob became worth half a million, and Freddy over \$50,000.

They both resigned their positions as messengers after that, hired a suite of offices, and devoted their attention exclusively to the market—young operators, in fact.

They did not attempt to carry on a brokerage business at all, but bought and sold stocks through regular brokers for themselves alone.

In this way they gradually increased their mutual capital, and enjoyed the unlimited satisfaction of being their own bosses.

When Bob attained his twenty-second year he and Eva Havens were married.

Freddy, as a matter of course, was best man at the wedding.

Mildred Snow officiated as bridesmaid.

The bride received many elegant presents, chief of which was a \$50,000 diamond and pearl necklace from Bob.

Andrew Mudgett and William Northrup were both at the ceremony, which took place at the bride's home in Brooklyn, and several other brokers of the younger set were likewise present to give Bob a good send-off.

Bob and Freddy are still partners, with a splendid suite of offices on the fifth floor of the Barnum Building, and the former is said to be worth \$1,500,000 at least.

He and Freddy are also constant associates outside of the office, and often visit one another's private dens at their residences, where they like to talk about old times in Wall street, when they were both On the Wing at a very humble salary.

THE END.

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